

**EXAMINING**  
**CRAFT**  
**BREWING**  
**AS A**  
**SOCIAL**  
**INNOVATION**  
**PROCESS**

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**Abstract**

This work examines the global movement of *craft brewing* as a case of transition design towards a multi-local society, where design is seen as an iterative search for quality.

Industrialisation over the last two centuries has brought about enormous changes socially, environmentally and economically. The beer industry is one of the most globalised of all, and serves as a strong example of the effects of global industry. Moreover, we can trace the roots of beer back to the dawn of civilisation—even argue that beer was a cause of the shift to an agrarian society. The rise of craft beer, which is displaying enormous growth in a declining market, is an example of a shift away from centralised production and monocultures, back to a more local, hands-on, personal approach to production.

As one aspect of the role of the expert designer within the realm of design for social innovation is that of giving visibility to promising cases, this thesis asks *What qualities can be distinguished within craft brewing? What kinds of narratives can be conceptualised based on these qualities and the practices of craft brewers?*

The work examines the concepts of social innovation, Design for Social Innovation, narrowing down to Manzini's concept of the *multi-local society*. This is then compared with concepts of Transition and Sustainment, and the fundamental ideas underlying each of these is examined. The concept of Quality is introduced to help relate these concepts and apply them to the case.

The case elaborates the historical role of beer in society, and describes the changes as production of beer shifted from household to global corporation. The phenomenon of craft beer is introduced, the difficulty of defining it is described. Craft brewing is examined in light of the theoretical framework, and a tentative reworking of the concept is offered.

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**Keywords** design, craft beer, multi-local society, quality.

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As one aspect of the role of the expert designer within the realm of design for social innovation is that of giving visibility to promising cases, this thesis asks: *What qualities can be distinguished within craft brewing? What kinds of narratives can be conceptualised based on these qualities and the practices of craft brewers?*

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# FOREWORD

Sitting with a friend in a brewpub in Copenhagen one afternoon, I took a look at my surroundings. I noticed the fermentation tanks at one end of the room, the bar at the other end, the patrons in between, and commented “this looks like an interesting example of sustainable local production—there could be a thesis in this.”

And we laughed.

Some time later, It has turned out that there *was* a thesis in it, and it was an example of more than just local production. At the time, I didn’t realise how much more, or that it was the start of a journey that lead to my questioning the very nature of existence. Or maybe every master’s thesis is like that, I don’t know. Anyway, this one is mine. Thanks for reading.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# 1. INTRODUCTION



**B**eer is innately social: The story of beer is the story of people. And also of grass, and single-celled fungi, and a world of biodiversity. How much of this do we realise when drinking it? How much do we know about what's in our beer, and where it came from?

*“In a restaurant, no one orders:  
‘a plate of food, please’,  
so why do people ask for ‘a beer’?”*

– Michael Jackson, beer writer.<sup>1</sup>

Our knowledge of what goes into our food, and therefore into our bodies every day, has been eroded, along with the social ties that once helped maintain that knowledge. Using concepts from social innovation theory, I will describe how this can be changed, and how craft brewing is helping to remind us that beer was an agricultural and a social product before it was ever a commercial or industrial one.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Since the industrial revolution, we have become more and more disconnected from the sources of our nutrition—both physically and conceptually. This is perhaps most obvious in the case of beer. 30% of global trade in food is handled by just 30 companies;<sup>2</sup> in the beer industry, a mere four companies are responsible for over 50% of the global market.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, 5 companies control 90% of the global grain trade.<sup>4</sup>

The staple grains—barley, wheat, and others—that were the very foundation of human civilisation have long since been commodified, and one can argue that, more recently, the same has happened to the main products of these ingredients: bread and beer. Both were traditionally made in the home, but are now predominantly commercial goods. It seems, however, that the tradition of baking bread at home has continued unabated, and is considered an unexceptional activity. The same cannot be said of brewing beer at home, the practice of which, in my experience so far, elicits surprise along with no small amount of suspicion—though this is always followed by an enquiry about tasting the finished product.

For thousands of years, beer has been a central component of our diet, a means of payment, a catalyst for sociability. There is debate among scholars as to whether it was beer or bread that inspired our hunter-gatherer ancestors to shift to an agriculture-based civilisation.<sup>5</sup> With the commercialisation of everyday goods, we have lost touch with nature of this product, the reality behind our everyday consumption, and with our facility to detect quality for ourselves.

Many of us have been born into a world where there is little or no differentiation made between varieties of basic foods. From the countless varieties of apples that grow around the world, a couple are available in the supermarket—often imported from another country. Again, the situation with beer is an extreme example of this: not only is little distinction—apart from branding—made between the mass-market lagers, there is no distinction whatsoever made between the ingredients used to make them. The typical lager ingredient list reads water, malt, hops, yeast. Each of these ingredients—yes, even water—varies greatly, and the use of different varieties impacts significantly on the final product.

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<sup>2</sup> Action Aid International, “Power Hungry: Six Reasons to Regulate Global Food Corporations.”

<sup>3</sup> Boesler, “How The Global Beer Industry Has Consolidated Over The Last 10 Years In Two Charts.”

<sup>4</sup> Action Aid International, “Power Hungry: Six Reasons to Regulate Global Food Corporations.”

<sup>5</sup> detailed eg. in Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing*.



Is it possible that craft beer can help us regain a sense of the reality behind our consumption? It is, after all, an example of a shift away from centralised production and monocultures, back to a more local, hands-on, personal approach to production. But does that make it better? What is craft beer? Is it just subjectively better beer? Can we really claim that a beer from a craft brewery is of higher *quality* than one from a centuries-old, hugely successful, multinational brewery whose quality department probably has more employees than the whole of the smaller brewery? Clearly, there's a contradiction here, and this is the point at which we must ask *what is quality?* and realise that there is no simple answer. Equally, there is no satisfactory definition of craft beer.

In the search for an appropriate theory from which to work when examining this case, several candidates were considered. From an initial reading of the situation as local production, I realised that local in itself was insufficient to describe it. I ultimately settled on Ezio Manzini's work on design for social innovation, both for its call to designers to help map and amplify promising cases of social innovation, and for its specific scenario described as small, local, open, connected, which, after spending some time immersed in the case, seemed to be the best description of the phenomenon I was examining. Yet it still seemed to be missing something, and so I additionally considered this theory in relation to two others that appeared to offer something similar, namely *Transition* and *Sustainment*. Examination of the three together resulted in a question arising which was familiar from my investigations into the case: *what is quality?*

At this point, the development of the work on theory and case influenced each other, in what could be described as a reciprocal relationship, or a coevolution. I examined the question of quality through food, through a philosophy of food, and directly through philosophy, to try to understand how it connected to the theories, and to the case. This resulted in my building a theoretical framework comprising three interconnected theories, operating on three levels, and connected by fundamental concepts—the most relevant being describable as quality. This framework was influenced by, but is not limited to, examination of the case. Likewise, my view of the case was influenced by the framework, and led to a speculative remaking of the whole concept of craft brewing.

## 1.2 METHODS AND DATA

An ethnographic study, involving a combination of interviews, literature review, and participant observation, was used to gather the data for this work.

Three interviews were carried out, in a semi-structured manner, with participants in various aspects of the craft brewing world; they are, respectively: a cofounder of a Finnish microbrewery; a homebrewer and teacher of brewing; a craft beer distributor, beer sommelier and former bartender. The interviews took 1-2 hours each and were audio-recorded and transcribed. Additionally, email correspondence was entered into with a craft brewery founder in Norway, and with a designer in the Netherlands who has developed brewing-related projects.

The literature review consisted of histories of beer and brewing, both general and craft-specific; histories of individual breweries, both craft and non-craft; homebrewing guides; web forums, journal articles, and industry publications.

Participant observation involved attending talks and tastings, visiting brewing locations, and having informal discussions with brewers and drinkers of craft beer.

During the thesis process, I myself began brewing. This gave me first-hand experience of the process and the ingredients, a sense of the knowledge required, a stronger realisation of what knowledge has been lost, and the satisfaction derived from devising a recipe, making something, and sharing it with others. It also allowed more in-depth discussions with interview subjects than would have otherwise been possible.

Following the principles of Grounded Theory,<sup>6</sup> the theoretical framework was settled on only after immersion in the topic area, and the research question was allowed to emerge from the empirical findings.

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Glaser and Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*.

## 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

One aspect of the role of the expert designer within the realm of design for social innovation is that of giving visibility to promising cases. Having recognised the brewing industry as a potentially fruitful topic of research, I set out to map the territory of craft brewing, but found that no satisfactory way of describing craft brewing had been established. I formulated the following research questions:

*What qualities can be distinguished within craft brewing? What kinds of narratives can be conceptualised based on these qualities and the practices of craft brewers?*

## 1.4 THE THEORY

This section will introduce the concept of Design for Social Innovation, and narrow down to Manzini's concept of the *multi-local society*, which is the specific area that will be considered in relation to the case. This will be compared with two other concepts, namely *Transition* (Hopkins) and *Sustainment* (Fry), and the fundamental ideas underlying each of these will be examined. The concept of *Quality* will be introduced to help relate these concepts and apply them to the case.

## 1.5 THE CASE

This section will elaborate the historical role of beer in society, and describe the changes in beer as its production shifted from household to global corporation. The phenomenon of craft beer will be introduced, and the difficulty of defining it will be described. Craft brewing will then be examined in light of the theoretical framework, and a tentative reframing of the concept will be offered.



## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



**B**rewing is not the everyday activity it once was, but beer is still an everyday, down-to-earth product. Theorising about even everyday activities is necessarily abstract, and can sometimes even be wilfully obtuse. While it is my hope that the theory and case sections of this thesis will work together in such a way that each helps to explain the other, one must come first. I begin, then, with the theory, in the abstract, and in the hope that any craft brewers reading this section might be able to recognise themselves in it.

## 2.1 DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

### 2.1.1 WHAT IS SOCIAL INNOVATION?

*“Social innovation can best be understood as a loose movement founded on ideas: above all the idea that in the right circumstances people can make, shape and design their world”* – Geoff Mulgan, Chief Executive of NESTA<sup>7</sup>

A variety of possible definitions of social innovation exist,<sup>8</sup> mostly pointing out the contrast between private companies or individuals and society in general when considering where the value of innovation accrues. These definitions may suffer somewhat from having an economics-based outlook; we will work with a somewhat broader definition of the field, from Ezio Manzini:

Social innovation is a process of change emerging from the creative re-combination of existing assets (from social capital to historical heritage, from traditional craftsmanship to accessible advanced technology), the aim of which is to achieve socially recognized goals in a new way.<sup>9</sup>

This description fits well with Mulgan’s (mentioned above), being slightly—and deliberately—vague, but clearly concerned with the social aspects of both means and ends. While Mulgan and Manzini both make clear that social innovation is nothing new—Manzini claims it is something that has always happened, “a normal component of every possible society,”<sup>10</sup> its particular relevance today can be found in its description by Nicholls<sup>11</sup> as a response to the failure of our systems of governance and of markets, a response “to patterns of modernity that have marginalised certain populations and that see the individual citizen as essentially an economic/consuming actor, not as an active

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7 Nicholls, Simon, and Gabriel, New Frontiers in Social Innovation Research.

8 Murray, Caulier-Grice, and Mulgan, The Open Book of Social Innovation.

9 Manzini, “Making Things Happen.”

10 Ibid.

11 New Frontiers in Social Innovation Research, 6.

participant in collective decision-making. From this perspective social innovation is a sense-making process that, first, frames key issues and then proposes alternative worldviews.” Social innovation today, then, is in part about moving away from the idea of citizen as mere consumer. Its power today comes from communications technologies that allow the spread of information, and the making and maintaining of relationships, faster and wider than before.

A key concept of social innovation is the *social economy*<sup>12</sup>, whose defining characteristics include distributed production, collaboration, deeper relationships and values. Contrast this with the notion of *restrictive economy*, one restricted to monetary exchange only, rather than any general forms of exchange; this is, of course, the dominant form economy takes today, and according to Tony Fry “is a fated failure—in the last instance, all it can serve and sustain is itself, and in so doing it has no allegiance to ‘human being.’”<sup>13</sup> Social innovation expands the notion of economy to include social value, and values. Indeed, it ranks social ahead of monetary value. We can of course also define social innovation without any specific reference to economy, as ideas “that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations.”<sup>14</sup>

While the effects of restrictive economy in the current context must be recognised, it is by focusing on social needs and social relationships, on social means and ends, that we get to the root of social innovation.

To show the scope of social innovation, Nicholls and Murdock identify multiple levels and dimensions<sup>15</sup>, from incremental to disruptive, and from individual to system, in which its effects can be seen. Of particular interest here is the disruptive level, which aims at systemic change, and can be “characterised by structured mass participation in political parties or formal membership schemes of social movements, on the one hand, or loose coalitions of individuals and interests united by an evanescent issue or technology such as social media, on the other.”<sup>16</sup>

Nicholls and Murdock claim social innovation as the sixth wave of modern macro-innovation (the first five being the industrial revolution and the ages of steam, steel, oil, and information), suggesting it can be “as disruptive and influential” as the preceding waves, and that it “attempts to disrupt and reconfigure systems themselves via changes to their internal institutional logics, norms, and traditions.”<sup>17</sup>

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12 Murray, Caulier-Grice, and Mulgan, *The Open Book of Social Innovation*, 4.

13 Fry, “An Other Economy The Voice of Sustainment.”

14 Murray, Caulier-Grice, and Mulgan, *The Open Book of Social Innovation*, 3.

15 Levels: incremental, institutional, disruptive. Dimensions: individual, organisation, network, system.

Nicholls & Murdock, *Social Innovation*.

16 Nicholls, Simon, and Gabriel, *New Frontiers in Social Innovation Research*, 3.

17 Nicholls and Murdock, *Social Innovation*.

## 2.1.2 WHAT IS DESIGN!

*“Everybody designs sometimes; nobody designs always.”* – Herbert Simon

For a general definition of design, we may turn to Herbert Simon, who in 1969 stated that “Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones.”<sup>18</sup> This is about as general as it gets, and has been described as “the most inclusive possible definition for a ‘designer.’”<sup>19</sup> Simon was concerned with design in the context of, among other things, artificial intelligence and economics, but his definition is mirrored by practicing design educators such as Horst Rittel:

Everybody designs sometimes; nobody designs always. Design is not the monopoly of those who call themselves ‘designers’. From a downtown development scheme to an electronic circuit; from a tax law to a marketing strategy, from a plan for one’s career to a shopping list for next Sunday’s dinner, all of these are products of the activity called design.<sup>20</sup>

Both Simon and Rittel described design in the sense of problem-solving. For Simon, by defining the problem we are presented with its solution.<sup>21</sup> Rittel, though, recognised this kind of problem as “tame” and added a layer of complexity by introducing the notion of “wicked problems,” which have no single definition and therefore no clear solution.<sup>22</sup> This kind of definition brings social and political issues into the sphere of design, and pushes design beyond problem-solving.



Figure 1. Design

18 Huppertz, “Revisiting Herbert Simon’s ‘Science of Design.’”

19 Ibid.

20 Rittel, The Reasoning of Designers.

21 Huppertz, “Revisiting Herbert Simon’s ‘Science of Design.’”

22 Rittel and Webber, “Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning.”



### 2.1.3 WHAT IS DESIGN (IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL INNOVATION)?

*“Design is concerned with making sense of things ... it collaborates actively and pro-actively in the social construction of meaning. And therefore, also, of quality, values and beauty.”* – Ezio Manzini<sup>23</sup>

Following Rittel’s lead, Manzini provides a definition of design that is appropriate to the context of social innovation. He believes that, along with solving problems, we ought to also see design as about sense-making—and both of these ways of seeing design coexist and influence each other. This duality of design situates it simultaneously in both the physical world and the social world, and it has effects in both of these worlds, these “two autonomous but interacting dimensions.”<sup>24</sup>



Figure 2. Design in the context of social innovation

### 2.1.4 WHAT IS DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION?

Manzini offers a “first definition” of design for social innovation as “everything that expert design can do to activate, sustain, and orient processes of social change toward sustainability”<sup>25</sup>

Expert design here refers to one end of a “field of possibility” which situates non-expert or non-trained people who design using their “natural designing capacity” (diffuse design) opposite trained or professional designers (expert design). Although expert design is specified in the

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<sup>23</sup> Manzini, Design, When Everybody Designs, 35.  
<sup>24</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 62.

definition above, Manzini makes clear that diffuse design has an equally large role to play. He uses non-expert designers, such as Carlo Petrini of Slow Food, as examples of successful design for social innovation. Manzini sets up a description of design modes, using the polarities of diffuse and expert design, and of problem-solving and sense-making.

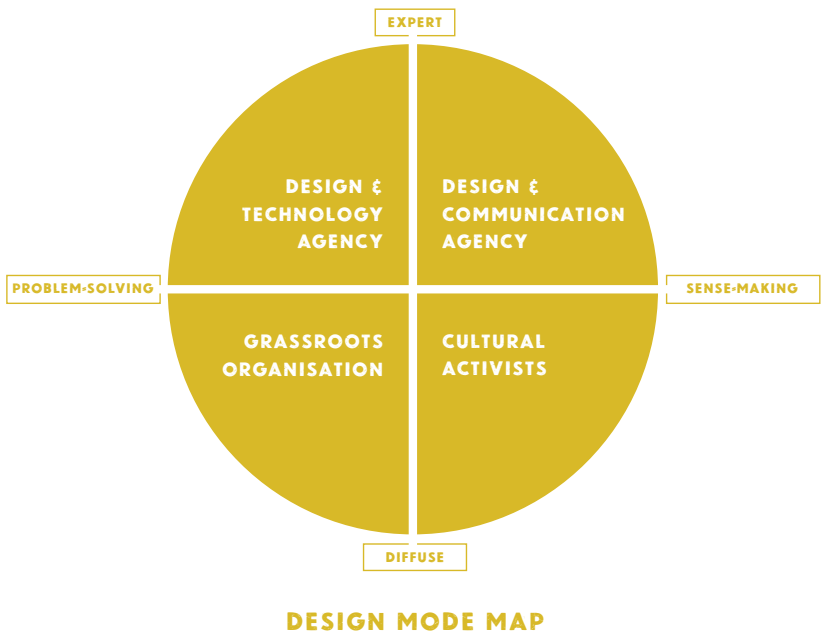


Figure 3. *Design mode map (adapted from Manzini, 2015)*<sup>26</sup>

Note that Manzini defines cultural activists simply as people who “play an active role in the cultural systems they are part of. If they do so, it is because they make best use of their design capacity.”<sup>27</sup> This is in contrast with Design Activism, which he situates in the expert / sense-making quadrant.

Note also the explicit inclusion of “social change toward sustainability,” making clear that this design is design *for* social innovation *for* sustainability, thus excluding the kinds of social change that lead away from sustainability.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 42.

Overall, Manzini sees design for social innovation as based on a broad definition of design (as a “field of possibility”) involving a rediscovery of the value of collaboration (an “intentional collaboration ... moving from the hyperindividualism of most industrialized societies towards a (re)discovery of the power of doing things together”<sup>28</sup>), and an equally broad definition of human activity that he calls simply “making things happen.”



*Figure 4. Design for social innovation*

### 2.1.5 THE ROLE OF THE (EXPERT) DESIGNER

Manzini details the (expert) designer’s sense-making role, specifically involving communication and strategy, in a four-step process.

1. Focusing and giving visibility to promising cases (highlighting their most interesting aspects)
2. Building scenarios of potential futures (showing what could happen if these cases were to spread and consolidate, becoming mainstream ways of doing)
3. Developing enabling systems (conceiving specific solutions to increase the promising cases efficiency and accessibility)
4. Promoting creative contexts (collaborating in the development of new governance tools)<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup>  
<sup>29</sup>

Ibid., 24.  
Manzini, “Design Research for Sustainable Social Innovation.”

### 2.1.6 DESIGNING FOR VISIBILITY

In making visible the promising concrete cases of emergent social innovation, we can highlight these cases where “in different ways and with different motivations, some people have re-oriented their behaviour and their expectations in a direction that appears to be coherent with the criteria for social and environmental sustainability.” Identification of these cases is crucial, as they are “the social experiments through which different ways of living are invented and tested.”<sup>30</sup> Ways of making these cases visible include literal mapping of cases in local areas, visualisations, storytelling, and what Manzini calls “weak signal amplification,” which highlights little-known cases, “with their characteristics and results and their underlying values, which may then feed the wider conversation on socially recognised values.”

Here we again see design as sense-making, situated in the social world. Manzini describes it, in almost aggressive terms, as a design intervention, “because it calls for the designing of communicative artifacts to make initiatives visible that would otherwise remain hidden. It is a design intervention also because a design choice underlies the decision of which cases to highlight: that of choosing the criteria by which to look at social dynamics, and on the basis of which to “extract” the promising cases.”<sup>31</sup>

### 2.1.7 SCENARIO: MULTI-LOCAL SOCIETY

Based on the selected promising cases, a future scenario can be developed. Manzini has built a specific scenario: the *multi-local society*,<sup>32</sup> which pulls together a variety of concepts, including communities of place, interest, and practice; neolocalism; and peer-to-peer networking, and is described as

A society where, contrary to dominant trends, the ‘global’ appears as a network of ‘local systems’, which is at the same time both local and cosmopolitan, based as it would be on communities and places that are strong in their own identity, embedded in a physical place, but open to (i.e. connected with) other places/communities.

Three key processes of social innovation are identified and credited with the power to bring this scenario into being:

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30 Ibid.

31 Manzini, *Design, When Everybody Designs*, 123.

32 “Design Research for Sustainable Social Innovation.”

- Cosmopolitan localism:

A renewed focus on the local, on place and community, but rather than being closed off to the rest of the world, being open to global flows of information and ideas. This is “the result of the balance between being rooted (in a place and in the community related to that place) and being open (open to global flows of ideas, information, people, things and money.”

- Creative communities:

Communities where “it is possible to do things differently and consider one’s own work, one’s own time and one’s own system of social relationships in a different light, searching for a form of wellbeing that is less product-intensive and more dependent on common goods (i.e. on social and environmental qualities).”

- Collaborative networks:

The organisational model made possible in a networked society, “capable of catalysing large numbers of interested people, of organising them in peer-to-peer mode, of building a common vision and a common direction.”

There are clear connections between these three processes, and Manzini suggests that over time they will merge to become a “single, complex social innovation process” which can lead to a multi-local society.

Though Manzini does not explicitly claim so, it seems that we may place these social innovation processes in parallel with the previously-introduced elements of design for social innovation. The processes of the multi-local society could each be seen as the outcome of one of the earlier processes: collaborative networks being, obviously, the result of collaboration; creative communities formed as the outcome of “making things happen.” Cosmopolitan localism, described in part as “a sense of place and culture” results from design as the act of sense-making, the “social construction of meaning.” Putting this all together, we can see how the nesting and iteration of straightforward-seeming processes (what elsewhere has been called “micro units” of change, and “recursive processes based on many small social inventions”<sup>33</sup>) can result in significant change (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Multi-local society

### 2.1.8 ACTIVE WELLBEING

One important property related to collaborative networks and creative communities is a new conception of wellbeing, moving from the 20th Century idea of wellbeing as the “minimization of personal involvement”<sup>34</sup> with the use of labour-saving devices and the outsourcing of tasks to a variety of service providers, to an “active wellbeing” wherein personal capability is once again valued.<sup>35</sup> This also moves us away from a product-based (and therefore restrictive economy-based) wellbeing to one focused on a person’s abilities to create value in their own life.

<sup>34</sup> Manzini, “Design Research for Sustainable Social Innovation.”

<sup>35</sup> This idea is based on (yet different from) the “capability approach” of Nussbaum & Sen (The Quality of Life).

## 2.2 TRANSITION

### 2.2.1 TRANSITION NETWORK

*“Transition is a movement of communities coming together to reimagine and rebuild our world.”* – Transition Network<sup>36</sup>

What began as an experiment in applying permaculture principles to the issue of peak oil has grown into a global network of *Transition Towns*—groups of people implementing bottom-up change at a local level. It could be said that by providing a set of guidelines, rather than a formal description, Transition is—in a theoretical sense—the everyday version of social innovation, the practical side of the more abstract academic discourse.

As a response to peak oil, the Transition model<sup>37</sup> was initially described as transitioning to a low-carbon society, but behind this succinct description lay a multitude of issues. Transition’s aim expanded accordingly, and is now more fully defined as to “replace the goal of economic growth with a goal of wellbeing, of happiness, of community and connectedness.”<sup>38</sup> Along with being a more fully realised version of the initial aim, this description brings us much closer to everyday life than the foggy idea of “low-carbon society;” Transition Network has worked to break down the complexity of these issues and empower people to take concrete steps towards change—on a deeper level than just “changing light bulbs and driving a bit more slowly.”<sup>39</sup>

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36 transitionnetwork.org, “About the Movement.”

37 Note that the Transition movement is not (directly) connected to socio-technical transitions literature.

38 Hopkins, *The Power of Just Doing Stuff*, 31.

39 *Ibid.*, 43.

## 2.2.2 TRANSITION DESIGN & SOCIAL INNOVATION

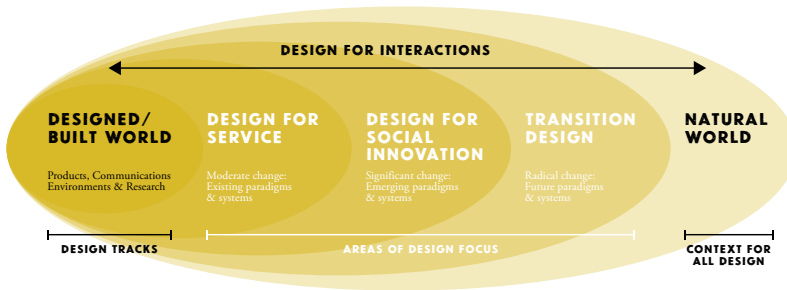


Figure 6. Transition Design framework<sup>40</sup>

Despite, or perhaps because of, its accessibility and down-to-earth nature, the ideas of Transition have been brought into the academic design world, formalised at Carnegie Mellon University<sup>41</sup> as *Transition Design*, and positioned as one step beyond design for social innovation (see Figure 6). However, according to Nicholls & Murdock,<sup>42</sup> Transition would be seen not as a separate area, but on the disruptive level of social innovation.

Clearly, the boundaries between these areas of design focus in our diagram are fuzzy; distinguishing between existing, emerging and future paradigms depends on one's position in time—and space. Manzini has introduced the term “disruptive normality” to indicate “a set of practices that, even though they became normal in a given context (and therefore they can locally spread), could be disruptive in other contexts, where mainstream practices are still dominant.”<sup>43</sup> This notion helps to make clear that the difference between *emerging* and *future*, and the difference between *significant* and *radical* change, depends on your context, on whether your normality is mainstream or disruptive. Nevertheless, this framework is useful for orienting ourselves amid a multitude of theories within design.

In any case, the fuzzy nature of this framework is intentional; it does not aim to pigeonhole or lay strict guidelines. As Scupelli writes, “The challenge for Transition Design is to define enough to inform people about the goal, provide enough scaffolding to support the complexity at hand, but not overprescribe the path to get there, leaving enough ambiguity to encourage creative reinterpretation, thinking, and

<sup>40</sup> Adapted from Irwin, Kossoff, and Tonkinwise, “Transition Design Provocation.”

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Social Innovation.

<sup>43</sup> Manzini, “Design as Everyday Life Politics.”



design.”<sup>44</sup> As an attempt to avoid getting tangled in the space-time continuum, and clarify our purpose, we can talk about *social innovation for transition*.

*“We are already living in transition phase”* – Ezio Manzini<sup>45</sup>

Manzini reminds us that, just as social innovation is something that has always happened, Transition is not something coming in the future, but a state in which we already exist. This means that Transition is both our aim and the context in which we operate. Rather than attempt to bring about transition from nothing, we must recognise that the process is underway, and work to amplify it. Design, here, is seen as a contributor to social innovation, which itself contributes to Transition.

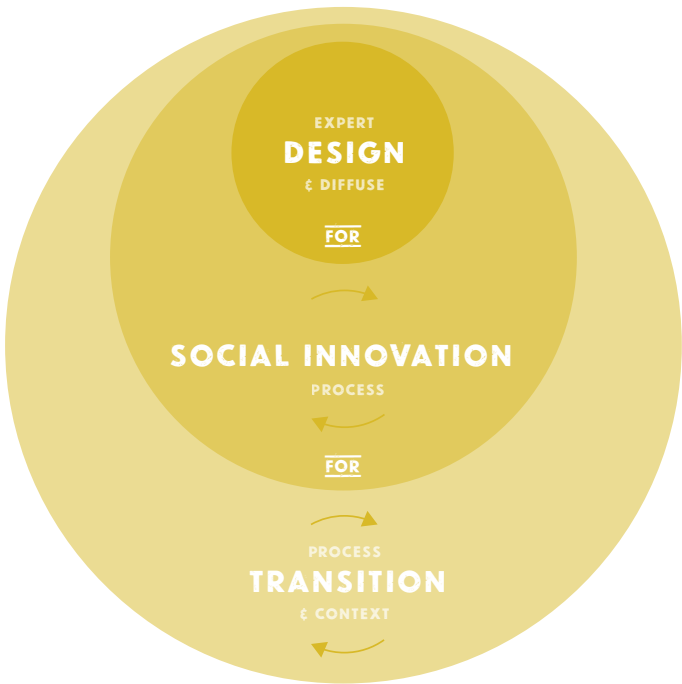


Figure 7. *Design for Social Innovation for Transition*

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Scupelli, “Designed Transitions and What Kind of Design Is Transition Design?”  
Manzini, “Design in the Transition Phase: A New Design Culture for the Emerging Design.”

## 2.3 SUSTAINING

### 2.3.1 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability, or sustainable development, can be seen, or defined, in various ways positive or negative, jargon or slogan, from “a good thing” to “an empty concept.”<sup>46</sup> Of the myriad definitions that could be mentioned here, I would like to use one that makes sense to me personally, and which I see as a usable and understandable explanation.

Sustainability may be defined as a dynamic balance among three mutually inter-dependent elements: (1) protection and enhancement of natural ecosystems and resources; (2) economic productivity; and (3) provision of social infrastructure such as jobs, housing, education, medical care and cultural opportunities.<sup>47</sup>

This definition arose out of a seminar on sustainable communities; it deals with social and cultural issues as a central aspect, and includes explicit acknowledgement of the interdependence of the social, economic and environmental factors. Bell and Morse describe it as “grounded” and “relatively precise” compared to other possible definitions<sup>48</sup>. Fuad-Luke considers it “the most apt from a design point of view,” saying:

Designers of all persuasions may recognize the daily balancing act that they already carry out which acknowledges the mutual interdependence of the three elements. This definition recognizes the services that nature provides and the duty of care man has to nature, invokes productivity rather than economic growth, and links sustainability to our overall social condition and health.<sup>49</sup>

This definition situates us neatly in Manzini’s multi-local space, that of creative communities, social relationships within and between communities, and embeddedness in place.

### 2.3.2 SUSTAIN-ABILITY

For a more philosophical take, we may turn to Tony Fry, who offers his own term, distinct from concepts of sustainability discussed here and elsewhere. *Sustain-ability*, according to Fry, “is an acceptance of anthropocentric desire—it is about “saving humanity” by saving what

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46 Bell and Morse, Sustainability Indicators, 3.

47 Dominski et al., Seminar Synopsis: Building the Sustainable City.

48 Bell and Morse, Sustainability Indicators, 79.

49 Fuad-Luke, Design Activism, 23.

we collectively depend upon (thus it refuses the deception of “saving the planet”) and it implies changing the process by which our lives are sustained.”<sup>50</sup>

Fry takes a step further back than some others, and makes clear that sustainability as generally understood is less about saving the planet than about saving the planet’s ability to support us and our lifestyles. He describes sustain-ability as a way of avoiding the contradictions inherent in more typical sustainability definitions, many of which he sees as paradoxically concerned with preserving the status quo. Fry also describes the current state of affairs, cleanly and succinctly, as unsustainability. The problem at the core of unsustainability is “the unknowing actions of our anthropocentric being.”<sup>51</sup>

Given that Fry bases a great part of his work on the thinking of philosopher Martin Heidegger<sup>52</sup>, it should not be surprising that being and time are, along with quality, central components of his work. For Fry, sustain-ability is ultimately “a means to secure and maintain a qualitative condition of being over time.”<sup>53</sup>

### 2.3.3 THE SUSTAINMENT

Fry has conceptualised a response to the condition of unsustainability in the form of an “epochal shift” to what he calls the *Sustainment*. This relates to the current era of unsustainability in the same way as the Enlightenment related to the Dark Ages<sup>54</sup>.

This new epoch could be called forth, in part, by a move from a quantity-based to a quality-based economy<sup>55</sup>.

Further, bringing about the Sustainment requires two fundamental activities. The first, “learning to eliminate the unknowing destruction that is at the core of unsustainability”, involves recognising that “destruction and creation are indivisibly implicated in each other,” and striving to destroy the unsustainable. The second, “learning to make as a material and cultural remaking,” involves changing not just our thinking, but our very way of being-in-the-world; it is both a conceptual and a material remaking, and includes “the remaking of ‘quality’ by design.”<sup>56</sup>

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50 Fry, *Design Futuring*, 44.

51 Fry, “The Dialectic of Sustainment.”

52 Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is a landmark work of 20th Century philosophy.

53 Fry, *Design Futuring*, 49.

54 Fry, “The Voice of Sustainment.”

55 Ibid.

56 Fry, “The Dialectic of Sustainment.”

Working to bring about the Sustainment necessitates a deep awareness of our actions and their consequences, of the destruction brought about by creation. However, Fry believes that implausible levels of awareness and decision-making in everyday life will not be necessary in order to maintain it. He claims that “sustaining ‘The Sustainment’ does not demand a condition of perpetual self-consciousness.” Rather, traditions and behaviours established in the cultural remaking will be “able to carry sustainment into realms of unknowing.”

More than a process or project, Sustainment is an essential value for Fry, one that “has to be in order for us to be. It is being itself.”<sup>57</sup>

## 2.4 PUTTING IT TOGETHER

While the main focus of this section has been Manzini's work, I have included Hopkins and Fry to provide perspectival context, as the work of all three seems somewhat to offer the same interpretation, just expressed in different ways from different perspectives—Hopkins' hands-on approach brings the issues from academia down to the everyday, while Fry forces us to question the basic assumptions of our existence.

Volumes can be written from an academic or philosophical point of view about the very basic situation of simply being. In the same way, theories such as have been discussed here can be formed around not just designing, but human activity in general. A concept like the Sustainment, while offering some hope for our future, reveals the frightening scope of what must be changed—in our world and ourselves—in order to ensure our survival. A powerful feature of Transition is its ability to cut through this and get to the basics of action, to what Rob Hopkins calls “just doing stuff”<sup>58</sup>. I hope that the topic I have chosen to focus on, being an original component of human civilisation yet having a new meaning in the face of our current situation, can both exemplify and clarify the possibilities for change that exist through either judicious application of theoretical ideals, or, more simply, “doing stuff.”

### 2.4.1 TAKING IT APART

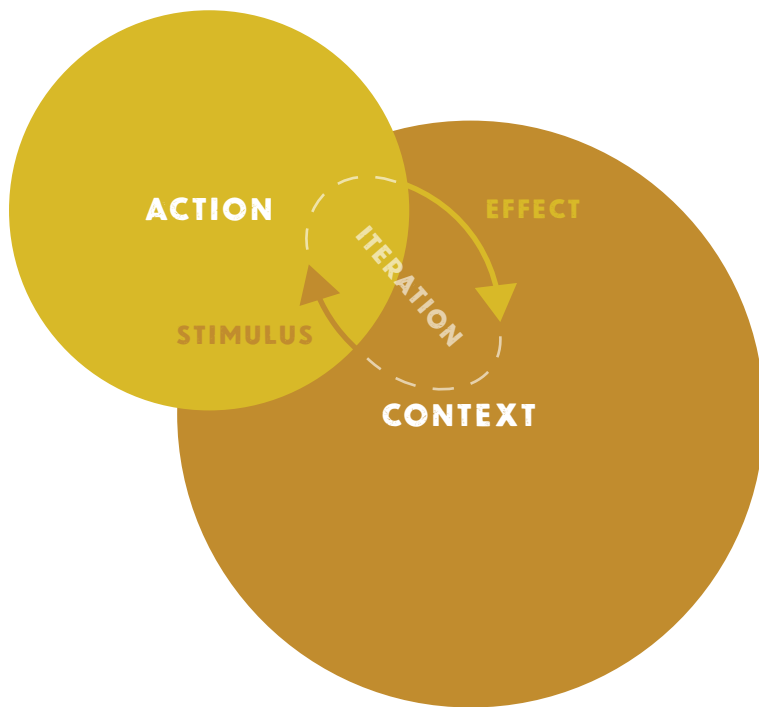
I shall now attempt to unpack and show the common elements of the theories I have presented.

Figure 8 represents a fairly basic concept: the stimulus our context (our environment, our being, our experience of the world) places on us to take a certain action, and correspondingly the resulting effect that action has on the context. Each influences the other, and the iteration of this changes both the environment and the actions over time.

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Hopkins, *The Power of Just Doing Stuff*.



*Figure 8. Action in context*

This may seem oversimplistic, but it underpins each of the theories already discussed, and indeed describes the essence of coevolution. In Manzini's work, social innovation (linked with design) is the context. For Hopkins, it's Transition, and Fry has Sustainment. Actions within these contexts are all stimulated by their context, and in turn affect that context.

### 2.4.2 LOOKING FOR THE MISSING PIECE

Something does, however, seem to be missing from this picture. If a simple cause-effect loop is the solution, if "just doing stuff" is all that's necessary to improve our situation, why is there still a problem? Why was there ever a problem? Has something been left unsaid?

Manzini describes a "culture of resilience"<sup>59</sup> emerging from a coevolution of cultural and sociotechnical innovation, whose values represent

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Manzini, "Design in the Transition Phase: A New Design Culture for the Emerging Design," 22.

a break with the mainstream and lead to a reevaluation of “what we count as well-being and the values on which we base our choices.” He describes the exploration of these ideas in such cultures “a search for quality,” and points out that by making them visible, they become recognisable to others. But what is this quality that Manzini talks of?

Fry speaks of the importance of “the remaking of ‘quality’ by design.”<sup>60</sup> Despite the depth of his writing, and his existential stance on world and being, his mentions of quality have been left without qualification.

Could quality, then, be the missing piece?

### QUALITY IS NOT OBJECTIVE

To avoid the danger of getting lost in phenomenology and existentialism, our exploration of the question of quality will begin by moving closer to our topic.

*Slow Food*, the movement that began as a reaction to the spread of fast food, is described by Manzini as “being the tangible face of a more general idea.”<sup>61</sup> Carlo Petrini, the founder of Slow Food, talks of “Renouncing objectivity” to deal with quality, claiming that “quality can not be calculated; there is no such thing as objective quality.”<sup>62</sup> He laments the attempts in the food industry to objectively pin down quality “which in effect associates quality with hygienic-sanitary safety.”<sup>63</sup>

Working in the context of food, Petrini breaks down quality to three components: *good*, *clean* and *fair*. He describes the good as an objective, a way to “perceive reality through our senses.” Clean corresponds somewhat to the “hygienic-sanitary” element mistaken for quality as a whole, but for Petrini is merely a kind of starting point, one that creates “the conditions for the good.” Finally, fair is seen as “respect for others.”

Having initially renounced objectivity, Petrini allows it back into his definition here, where clean and fair are objective, and correspond reasonably closely with concepts of social and economic (fair), and environmental (clean), sustainability. The good, though, remains subjective. If there is no such thing as objective quality, then the essence of quality must be the good, the perception of reality.

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60 Fry, “The Dialectic of Sustainment.”

61 Manzini, “Design in the Transition Phase: A New Design Culture for the Emerging Design,” 171.

62 Petrini, Furlan, and Hunt, *Slow Food Nation*, 93.

63 Ibid., 92.

## QUALITY IS NOT ONLY SUBJECTIVE

There is good reason for uncertainty around subject/object dualism when it comes to food. While Petrini writes “The subjectivity of quality must be a cause of orientation, not of confusion,”<sup>64</sup> Nicola Perullo argues that we cannot maintain such a division when the food and drink we consume is “a unique piece of the external solid world that we incorporate into ourselves.”<sup>65</sup>

Perullo’s *aesthetics of taste*, which he describes as a philosophy not of food, but with food, involves multiple “modes of access” to the experience of taste, which is “an intertwining of bodily and mental processes in constant interaction with the surrounding environment.”<sup>66</sup> Again, this refutes the subject/object dualism set up by early western philosophy.

*“Subject and object are not separate entities, but rather become a totally intertwined, dynamic, and complex in-between organism.”<sup>67</sup> – Nicola Perullo*

## BEING AND DUALISM

At this point it may be useful to look briefly at this split between subject and object, between mind and matter, and how it relates to being. Cartesian dualism is the name generally applied; we can venture back a little further than Descartes, though. William Barrett’s book *Irrational Man*, a comprehensive review of existentialist philosophy that begins with Plato and extends to Sartre, points (via Heidegger and his dealings with being) to a single passage in Plato’s *Republic* as the source of the division. As we saw when looking at Tony Fry’s work, being is an important element for Fry as much as for Heidegger. As Barrett states, Heidegger is concerned with the “preconceptual understanding of Being” that, rather than an abstract or highbrow philosophical concept, is “the most concrete and closest of presences,”<sup>68</sup> simply our everyday lived experience. As basic and essential as being seems when looked at in this way, it was apparently forgotten about after Plato:

The fall of Being, for Heidegger, occurred when the Greek thinkers detached things as clear and distinct forms from their encompassing background, in order that they

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64 Ibid., 94.

65 Perullo and Montanari, *Taste as Experience*, 6.

66 Ibid., 18.

67 Ibid., 21.

68 Barrett, *Irrational Man*, 213.



might reckon clearly with them ... This act of detachment was accompanied by a momentous shift in the meaning of truth for the Greeks ... The quality of a-letheia, un-hiddenness, had been considered the mark of truth; but with Plato ... truth came to be defined, rather, as the correctness of an intellectual judgment.<sup>69</sup>

It is here, in the redefinition of the meaning of truth from something apparent—something sensed—to something considered in the abstract, that the source of subjectivity and objectivity can be found. But for Heidegger, truth resides in Being itself, “without which there could be neither subject nor object.”<sup>70</sup> This division, useful as it has been, leaves direct experience—Being—behind.

### QUALITY IS EXPERIENCE(D)

Returning now to our exploration of quality, but armed with the idea that subject and object need not be placed in opposition to each other, but can exist together in the field of being, what do we find?

In Perullo’s aesthetics, “Taste is the embodied experience that permits the most appropriate knowledge of the other, the perceptual ability that allows a true contact with things.”<sup>71</sup> Taste, in turn, lets us recognise quality, where this means “recognizing values rather than mere facts.”<sup>72</sup>

Despite Petrini’s back-and-forth regarding subjectivity and objectivity, he recognises that quality is the perception of reality. Food is his way to experience it: he says “food is the primary means of interpreting reality, the world around us.”<sup>73</sup>

Both Petrini and Perullo see food as an aid in directly experiencing the world. Both seem to be hinting towards quality laying somewhere close to Heidegger’s Being. If we look at Robert Pirsig’s metaphysics of Quality, we find that it chimes with this. In attempting to discover whether quality lay in the subject or the object, Pirsig concluded that it could be neither. Rather than position it as a combination of the two, or something in between, Pirsig puts quality beyond the subject/object division:

*“Quality is a direct experience independent of and prior to intellectual abstractions.”<sup>74</sup>*

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69 Ibid., 230.

70 Ibid., 237.

71 Perullo and Montanari, Taste as Experience, 82.

72 Ibid., 77.

73 Petrini, Furlan, and Hunt, Slow Food Nation, 40.

74 Pirsig, Lila, 73.

This, of course, is the same move Heidegger made regarding Being, and our preconceptual understanding of it. Does this mean that quality *is* being? Pirsig avoids defining it directly, saying “You understand it without definition, ahead of definition.”<sup>75</sup> It may seem flippant to sidestep a definition of quality, to reduce it to “you know it when you see it”—or more appropriately here, when you *taste* it—but this is, in a sense, the only starting point, as our senses are our starting point for experiencing the world. Quality cannot be objectively pinned down because it lies beyond objectivity.

The missing piece wasn’t missing after all, it was hiding in plain sight. What was missing was our recognition of it.

### 2.4.3 PUTTING IT BACK TOGETHER

Where are we left after this digression, and how might we fit these pieces together?

- Being, our experience of reality, is our ultimate context. It is reality itself that stimulates our actions, but by limiting our recognition of reality to the objective, we lose sight of much of the essence of being. Fry says of his concept of Sustainment, “it is being itself.”<sup>76</sup>
- Manzini describes exploration in this context as a “search for quality.”<sup>77</sup>
- Pirsig has stated: “Quality is the continuing stimulus which our environment puts upon us to create the world in which we live.”<sup>78</sup>
- Social Innovation is described (by Mulgan) as the idea that “people can make, shape and design their world.”<sup>79</sup>
- Participation in making and shaping the world is described by Manzini as Active Wellbeing.<sup>80</sup>
- It is impossible to resist completing this loop by saying that we cannot have wellbeing without being.

The circularity of all this is pointed to by Manzini’s claim that:

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Fry, *Becoming Human by Design*, 3.

<sup>77</sup> Manzini, “Design in the Transition Phase: A New Design Culture for the Emerging Design,” 22.

<sup>78</sup> Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, loc. 4177–4178.

<sup>79</sup> Nicholls, Simon, and Gabriel, *New Frontiers in Social Innovation Research*.

<sup>80</sup> Manzini, “Design Research for Sustainable Social Innovation.”

*“in the twenty-first century, social innovation will be interwoven with design as both stimulus and objective.”<sup>81</sup>*

Our simple concept of action in context holds up through all of this, though at this point it is better to make clear that many actions occur in the same context, and redraw our diagram accordingly (Figure 9). We can now see more clearly how one action can influence the context, which in turn influences other actions. Again, this is a very basic idea, but to be effective it requires us expanding our idea of quality (or being, if you prefer) to recognise “values rather than mere facts.”<sup>82</sup> Fry seems to be suggesting a version of the same thing when he argues that we need to “remake thinking” to create “a mode of ‘trans-formative being-in-the-world toward-sustainment’”<sup>83</sup>—to recognise more fully our position in the world and the consequences of our actions, and act accordingly.

My hope, then, is that actions taken in the pursuit of quality—as the felt recognition, the preintellectual understanding of quality—can be as effective as specific, planned “sustainability” initiatives in leading us to a more fitting way of being in the world.

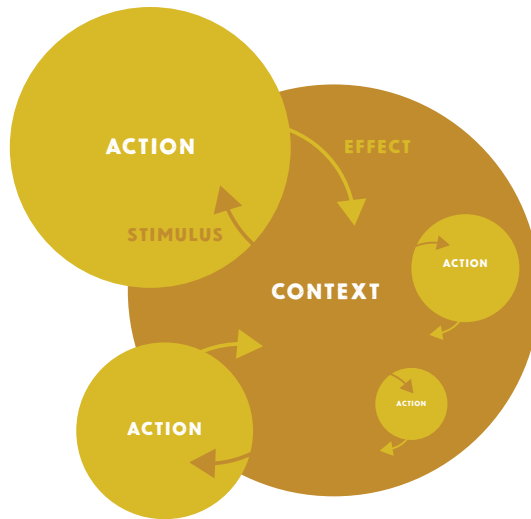


Figure 9. Many actions in context

81 Manzini, “Design in the Transition Phase: A New Design Culture for the Emerging Design,” 55.  
82 Perullo and Montanari, *Taste as Experience*, 77.  
83 Fry, “The Dialectic of Sustainment.”

# 3. INTRODUCING THE CASE



**D**iscussing beer and social innovation, it is difficult to escape the thought that beer was in a way the original driver of social innovation, being part of the reason for the establishment of human settlements, and thus the development of society as we know it. In this section, I will describe the coevolution of beer, brewing, and society; and discuss the emergence of craft brewing as a reaction to the radical industrialisation of brewing and the commodification of beer.

## 3.1 WHAT IS BEER?

### 3.1.1 PREHISTORY

*“The earliest information available from the Near and Middle East indicates that humans knew how to make bread and beer by 6000 BC.”<sup>84</sup>*

The origins of beer date back as far as civilisation itself. Evidence has been found of beer drinking in Mesopotamia circa 4000 BC. Indeed, there is much debate among historians, anthropologists, and biologists<sup>85</sup> about whether the shift from a nomadic, hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a settled, agricultural one was prompted by the intention to make bread, or beer. These two staples went hand in hand, being made in similar ways from the same ingredients, and it seems like answering “both” would be an acceptable way to settle the argument.

Corran introduces his comprehensive *History of Brewing* by stating that “Beer has been defined as ‘a pleasant drink containing alcohol.’”<sup>86</sup> This definition, while pleasingly succinct, does leave out some details, which Corran then spends numerous pages filling in. I shall attempt to be more brief. Beer is made with the aid of two important natural processes: germination and fermentation. Grains, typically barley and also often wheat, are moistened so that they begin to germinate, then dried to halt the grains’ growth process—this procedure is known as malting. The prepared grain is heated in water, where the enzymes produced during germination convert the grains’ store of starch into sugar. Fermentation is the action of yeast on this sugar, consuming it and in turn producing ethanol and carbon dioxide.

Germination not only makes grain easier for human consumption, it also gives rise to “vitamins and other nutritionally desirable substances.”<sup>87</sup> Fermentation, too, increases the nutritional value of certain foods, along with preventing spoilage—a low energy way in which to preserve foods, featuring

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<sup>84</sup> Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing*, 33.

<sup>85</sup> detailed eg. in Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing*.

<sup>86</sup> Corran, *A History of Brewing*, 16.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

alongside drying and salting.”<sup>88</sup> We can see, then, how making beer would have been valuable in early societies.

The creation and use of beer is considered an indicator of social complexity, to the point that “[m]ost Egyptologists are of the opinion that grain production and distribution, for brewing and baking purposes, underpinned the ancient Egyptian economy and the political organisation of that ancient society, and that a study of beer production can provide an insight into the structure of ancient Egypt itself.”<sup>89</sup>

### 3.1.2 THE MIDDLE AGES

Knowledge of brewing spread along with barley itself throughout Europe, and by the Middle Ages was well established. This period also witnessed a scaling-up of brewing activities beyond the household level. Monasteries were likely the first places to brew in larger, commercial, quantities. The world’s oldest existing brewery, Weihenstephaner, was founded by Benedictine monks and obtained a licence to brew and sell beer from the city of Friesing, Bavaria in 1040<sup>90</sup>. Outside of monasteries, increasing urbanisation led to commercialisation of brewing in the growing towns and cities, along with the inevitable regulations and taxation—although some enlightened city authorities supplied communal brewing equipment.

The changing situation led to a change in the product, too: the preservative value of hops became apparent when dealing with beer produced in larger quantities and transported over greater distances, and this plant gradually came to replace other bittering ingredients.<sup>91</sup>

### 3.1.3 THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

By the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, commercial operations were beginning to replace domestic brewers, thanks in part to regulations encouraging this, and not coincidentally making it easier for taxes to be collected.<sup>92</sup> This era also saw the introduction of differential duties, where stronger drinks were subject to higher rates of tax. Some of these were said to be temporary measures (to raise funds during times of war, for example,

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88 Bamforth, *Food, Fermentation and Micro-Organisms*.

89 Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing*, 35.

90 Weihenstephaner, “History.”

91 Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing*, 268—76.

92 *Ibid.*, 365—67.

or simply to bankroll a profligate monarchy) but it has always seemed easier to enact legislation than to repeal it.

The increasing size of brewhouses was further enabled by developments in science, and advances in brewing equipment along with the development of scientific instruments such as the thermometer and hydrometer, which came to be used by the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, allowed greater consistency in the product. The steam engine, which was taken into use by breweries as well as coalmines and cotton mills, both saved money and allowed for expansion of operations.<sup>93 94</sup>

The expertise available in commercial breweries by now far exceeded that of household brewers, and it seems the home-made product finally fell out of favour in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In England, for example, where scientific methods were first employed in breweries, the proportion of beer brewed in the home dropped from 50% to 20% between 1820 and 1830.<sup>95</sup>

Commercial and technical developments changed not just the standard of beer, but also the style. In Bavaria, some beer was fermented at lower temperatures, often with the aid of ice from nearby lakes (in the time before mechanically-aided refrigeration, brewing took place only from October to March, as beer brewed in warmer temperatures was more susceptible to spoiling), and stored, or *lagered*, to mature for a time before sale. Beer produced in this way kept longer, and so could travel greater distances; this of course suited those breweries who wanted to increase sales through wider distribution. Colder fermentation requires yeast that will tolerate the cold, and such yeast was not abundant. When a Bavarian monk brought some to the Bohemian town of Plzen in 1842, the locals built a brewery and, using the unusually clean local water, and hops from nearby Zatec, brewed an unusually pale and light beer. This came to be known as *pilsner*, and became popular throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Brewers in northern and western Europe began mimicking this lagering technique and brewing pilsner-style beers, though the resulting product did not gain immediate acceptance from a public accustomed to stronger, fuller-tasting beverages.

By the time the 20th Century came around, Louis Pasteur had published his *Études sur la Bière*, identified yeast as a living organism, and developed his technique of pasteurisation, while Emil Hansen at the Carlsberg brewery in Denmark had managed to isolate a single strain of bottom-fermenting yeast. Shortages and taxation resulting from two wars in Europe changed public expectations around beer. Hornsey pithily states that World War I “subconsciously prepared the British

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93 Ibid., 424—40.

94 Corran, *A History of Brewing*, 160—74.

95 Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing*, 506.



drinker for lager-style beers by subjecting him to pale, low-strength products.”<sup>96</sup>

With the advances in brewing knowledge and technology, brewers were able to produce a shelf-stable product using less raw material than before, and it was convenient for them to claim that they were following consumer tastes by brewing weaker beer that was cheaper to produce. Corran points out the missing piece of this particular puzzle: a consumer drinking a weak beer “might well have preferred it to a stronger but less reliable brew, though not necessarily to a stronger and equally reliable one.”<sup>97</sup>

Across the Atlantic in the United States, the brewing industry had grown rapidly in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century thanks to an influx of millions of immigrants from beer-drinking lands like Germany and Ireland, with a number of the German arrivals—with names like Miller, Coors and Pabst—founding breweries. One of their number, the Anheuser-Busch brewery, was the first in the US to pasteurise its beers, and the first to distribute them far beyond its local market, using initially a series of railside ice-houses, and later refrigerated railroad cars (after mechanical refrigeration had been developed). Its signature *Budweiser* beer, adapted from a lager beer recipe that originated in the Bohemian town of Budějovice (*Budweis* in German), became the first national beer brand.<sup>98</sup>

The effect of prohibition in the US was to reduce the number of breweries from over 1300 to a mere 164, with the larger businesses having a better chance of survival. Anheuser-Busch was already one of the biggest, and it survived through pursuit of activities closely related to the brewing business, including selling malt syrup and bakers’ yeast labelled with the Budweiser name. Once prohibition was repealed in 1933, there was still, for a time, an upper limit of 3.2% alcohol content on the strength of beer. The combination of this restriction with the wiping out of most of the nation’s producers reduced the diversity of beers to the point that, eventually, for many people the word *beer* came to mean light, pale lager beer and nothing else.

### 3.1.4 THE PRESENT DAY

The latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was an age of consolidation in the brewing industry. The spread of television, and with it television advertising, led to the dominance of a handful of global beer brands,

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96 Ibid., 612.

97 Corran, *A History of Brewing*, 225.

98 Knoedelseder, *Bitter Brew*, 24.

with many local varieties simply disappearing after their businesses were acquired.

Consolidation became more extreme in the new millennium. In 2002, the top six brewing companies (Anheuser-Busch, Interbrew, South African Breweries, Heineken, Miller, American Beverages) were responsible for over 30% of global beer production. By 2016, five of those six (all except Heineken) had merged, resulting in a situation where a single company, now named AB-InBev, produces 30% of the world's beer, spread over about 400 different brands globally, and having “a dominant presence in nearly every major market.”<sup>99</sup> Add Heineken, Carlsberg, and China Resources Enterprise, and a mere four companies claim over 50% global market share in beer.<sup>100</sup>

This near-monopoly of producers brings with it, of course, a monopoly of taste: of all the global beer brands, only one—Guinness stout—is something other than a pale lager. Ivan Illich<sup>101</sup> coined the term *radical monopoly* to describe a situation wherein not one brand, but rather one type of product comes to dominate. Within the world of beer, it's easy to see the dominance of mass-produced pale lager beer as a radical monopoly, and the industrial processes that favour volume ahead of variety, demanding consistency in the product regardless of local conditions, leading to monocultures not just in the end product, but in the raw materials too.

Beer is always evolving. As we have seen, it has changed in response to changes in society and technology—and it has often prompted changes in society and technology. It has gone from being an essential part of our diet to an ‘aspirational’ luxury; from a homemade, everyday item to an unknowable industrially-produced commodity. Beer has coevolved along with us (as have barley, wheat, hops, and yeast. As Michael Pollan has said, “it makes just as much sense to think of agriculture as something the grasses did to people as a way to conquer the trees”<sup>102</sup>), and there is no reason to believe it won't continue to do so.

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99 Mickle, “AB InBev Takeover of SABMiller Would Realign Global Beer Industry.”

100 Boesler, “How The Global Beer Industry Has Consolidated Over The Last 10 Years In Two Charts.”

101 Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, 66–68.

102 Pollan, *The Botany of Desire*, 10.

## 3.2 WHAT IS CRAFT BEER?

The terms *craft beer* and *craft brewing* are not universally accepted (as we shall see), but have in recent years become common descriptions for beers brewed at a smaller scale, with greater regard to flavour, or contrasting in other ways with large-scale industrial production. An overlapping and almost interchangeable term is *microbrewing*—and more recently *nanobrewing* for even smaller-scale operations. Here I will describe how these terms came about, and examine the idea of craft itself.

### 3.2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY

The concept of craft beer as we know it today came from the United States. In 1965, the US had 182 national and regional breweries, plus one very small local one (which these days could be called a micro-brewery): Anchor Brewing in San Francisco, which had been founded in 1874 but was now on the verge of closing. A new owner, Fritz Maytag, stepped in and steadied the ship, investing in a laboratory among other things. Anchor began bottling its Steam beer in 1971, and later introduced versions of traditional English-style beers—a porter, a hoppy ale, a brown ale, a barley wine—all far removed from the light pale lagers being made by both the national and regional brewers, and imported from Europe. Most drinkers remained loyal to the lagers they knew, but Anchor sold enough of its unusual beers to not only survive, but inspire a new generation of brewers.

Maytag had a vision of “a brewery in every city,”<sup>103</sup> which must have seemed far-fetched in the context of the time. By the late ‘70s, the number of brewers in the US had dropped below 45—not even one for each state, let alone each city. But Anchor drew the attention of a handful of would-be brewers, and Maytag was generous with his advice, and even his ingredients. By the 1980s, homebrewing had been legalised, a tax break had been given to brewers producing less than 2 million barrels per year, and English writer Michael Jackson’s *World Guide to Beer* had been published. These three events are perhaps of equal importance with regard to what was to follow.

In the age of the microprocessor, the term *microbrewery* came to define breweries producing less than 15,000 barrels per year (a long way below the ‘small brewery’ limit of two million barrels). In 1984 there

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Hindy, *The Craft Beer Revolution*, 56.

were 18 microbreweries in the country; this rose to over 500 a decade later (by which time the large brewers had consolidated themselves down to a count of 22).<sup>104</sup> Partly through Jackson's book, which was the first attempt at exploration and classification of beer styles globally, the newly empowered homebrewers of America discovered and attempted to emulate the kinds of beers long since lost from—or never arrived to—their country. Some of these homebrewers decided to scale up, and the resulting microbreweries made beer blending the traditions of European brewing with an enthusiasm for experimentation, working with new hop varieties or ageing beer in whiskey barrels. As some of these grew beyond *micro*, another term was needed to differentiate them from the old guard of lager brewers. The phrase that came to be used was *craft brewery*. As of 2016, there are well over 5000 craft breweries in the US, accounting for over 10% of market share, and the beers they are making have inspired brewers worldwide.

### 3.2.2 AN “OFFICIAL” DEFINITION

The Brewers' Association (BA) is an industry body representing homebrewers and craft breweries in the United States (which in itself shows the importance of the connection between the two). It has cleverly avoided answering the question of what a craft beer is (though it does say “Trying to define craft beer is a difficult task, as beer can be very subjective and a personal experience”—which itself actually seems like a good starting point) by instead offering a definition for a craft brewer. This has changed over time: an early version was simply “Any brewery using the manual arts and skills of a brewer to create its products.”<sup>105</sup> As of 2016, their definition is as follows:

An American craft brewer is small, independent and traditional.

Small: Annual production of 6 million barrels of beer or less (approximately 3 percent of U.S. annual sales). Beer production is attributed to the rules of alternating proprietorships.

Independent: Less than 25 percent of the craft brewery is owned or controlled (or equivalent economic interest) by an alcoholic beverage industry member that is not itself a craft brewer.

Traditional: A brewer that has a majority of its total beverage alcohol volume in beers whose flavor derives from traditional or innovative brewing ingredients and their fermentation. Flavored malt beverages (FMBs) are not considered beers.<sup>106</sup>

We can see that this definition is largely political in nature. The BA itself states that its main purpose is to allow statistics to be compiled,

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>106</sup> Brewers' Association, “Craft Brewer Definition.”

and to differentiate its members from the much bigger national and international companies<sup>107</sup>. Still, this is used to communicate with the beer-drinking public, and is the closest thing the industry has to an official definition, so it's worth examining it briefly.

*Small*: The annual production limit was increased from 2 to 6 million barrels<sup>108</sup> to remain in line with a change in the US tax relief measure, and this change in the definition was opposed by some BA members who claimed it disproportionately favoured the largest of BA's breweries, Boston Beer Company.<sup>109</sup> Six million barrels—for a single brewery, remember—is higher than Finland's total annual beer consumption,<sup>110</sup> nicely demonstrating just how relative "small" can be when considered in this way. There may be another way to think about small.

*Independent*: here, this really just means independent from the large breweries (in an environment where large brewers are both buying craft brewers and creating their own faux-craft brands). It doesn't preclude ownership by an investment firm, for example, or any other non-small entity.

*Traditional*: this is a somewhat twisted interpretation of traditional, having been initially used to exclude brewers who use adjunct ingredients like corn syrup as a cost-saving measure. Many craft brewers pride themselves on being non-traditional. The recent addition of "traditional or innovative brewing ingredients" to the wording only confuses matters.

So, while at first glance this definition of *small, independent, traditional* seems straightforward and even meaningful, it has quite a weak connection to the actual qualities that differentiate these producers. Ultimately, it does little more than state that a craft brewer is not 'not a craft brewer'. While this allows a number of US breweries to identify themselves and lobby within the overall beer industry, it is of limited use for anyone else.

This is particularly true outside of the US. Some countries such as Australia or Brazil were in a similar situation, where industrial-age large-scale brewing was the dominant, or only, paradigm. Elsewhere, most notably in Belgium, Germany, and Britain, many small producers, and a variety of styles, have survived—and served as the inspiration for many of the US craft brewers to begin brewing for themselves. This was possible in part because of consumer preference, but also due to regulations regarding ownership of retail outlets by breweries. While the larger brewers pursued the familiar strategies of consolidation,

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107 Herz, "The Importance of Defining Small and Independent."

108 One US barrel contains 117.35 litres; 6 million barrels equates to 704.1 million litres.

109 Hindy, *The Craft Beer Revolution*, p.205.

110 In 2015, Finnish beer consumption was 420.9 million litres. "Tilastot | Panimoliitto."

volume, and low prices, the smaller ones focused on quality and premium pricing.<sup>111</sup>

It is difficult, then, to translate the US concept of craft beer to a different context. There is a kind of cognitive dissonance when trying to reconcile its story—of something brand new emerging against a background of blandness—with a local environment where variety has always existed. This is well described by British writer Pete Brown:

We take our lead on craft beer from America, believing that US craft beer styles, and the flavours they represent, are the ones that matter. We frame any attempt to define craft beer in relation to the American definition. But we, and the Germans and Belgians, have something the American craft movement doesn't—an unbroken history of interesting, flavourful, small-scale brewing. You could argue—because it's true—that we have always had craft brewing, long before the Americans coined the phrase in its current context.<sup>112</sup>

To contextualise this, consider that in 1959, when lager was already dominant in the US, it had only 2% of the beer market in the UK, and still only 25% in 1980<sup>113</sup>.

The gradual dominance of the international brewing conglomerates and that of pale lager beer is, of course, closely connected. The economies of scale, global reach, and volume-based approach matched well with a product that cost less to produce and so could be sold for less, was more stable when transported so could travel greater distances, and tasted lighter (and contained less alcohol) so could be consumed in greater quantities. It is, in fact, very difficult to disentangle these two stories. Similarly, it is difficult to separate the signature products of the US craft brewing industry—intensely hoppy, malty pale ales, or barrel-aged imperial stouts—from the brewers that make them. As a result, the *de facto* definition of craft beer is a description of these beer styles, which says little about the processes, contexts, or people behind them.

Brown says “if we take our cues from America, craft beer is all about novelty,”<sup>114</sup> and this is true: everything about craft brewing in the US was novel in its context. But this doesn't translate well. Those small brewers who form part of the “unbroken history” now find themselves in a strange position, having neither the novelty value of new craft brewers nor the reach or economic model of the large brewers. At the same time, large brewers are reacting to the success of craft in part by producing beers similar in character to the well-known craft products (sometimes describing them as having been “crafted”). Can these be called craft beers?

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111 Wilson and Gourvish, *The Dynamics of the International Brewing Industry since 1800*, 90–91.

112 Brown, “Another Long Post about Craft Beer.”

113 Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing*, 619.

114 Brown, “Another Long Post about Craft Beer.”

The term *craft beer* is now in the position of being derided as meaningless by insiders, especially now that the brewing landscape has changed. However, the public at large is only now becoming familiar with the term, as flavourful beer is becoming more mainstream (in part thanks to those large brewers' new products), and the newcomers may not know anything of the history of "big beer" or craft beer, or be able to detect any meaningful difference between the two. The craft brewing industry has grown significantly, craft brewers have expanded internationally, and marketing has come to play a bigger role as competition has increased. So, while "big beer" is starting to imitate the look of craft, some craft brewers are beginning to look—just a little—like the large brewers. When once it was easy to distinguish between a micro-brewery producing a few thousand litres a year from a multinational corporation producing millions, now there are several shades of grey in between these two extremes.

the negative side of the standard definition of craft brewing was highlighted by Garrett Wales, co-founder of 10 Barrel Brewing, after his brewery was purchased by AB-InBev, the world's largest brewing company:

The idea and label of 'craft' is absurd ... If the beer is made with good ingredients and made with love from the same recipes that have been perfected for years and years, to say it's not craft because of its ownership is ridiculous. The consumer decides what's craft. To tell them they don't get to make that decision flies into the face of everything we've stood for.<sup>115</sup>

Callon et al. have theorised an *economy of qualities*<sup>116</sup> in which a central point is that a product may be appraised by a consumer based not only on the physical qualities of the product, but also on other factors which carry equal weight in the consumer's view. Even if the physical product is unchanged, developments such as the change in ownership that we see in the case of 10 Barrel can lead to a change in the qualification of the product.

### 3.2.3 WHAT IS CRAFT?

Tony Fry begins his essay *Green Hands Against Dead Knowledge*<sup>117</sup> with a concise description of craft as "the skill of making." But of course, there's far more to it than that. He points out that the understanding we have of craft exists contextually, within our time and culture, and as the context changes, so will our conception of craft. Even if the physical manifestations of the craft itself remain the same, its meaning in the world shifts as the world changes around it. (There may be reasons

<sup>115</sup> Nurin, "Defining Craft."

<sup>116</sup> Callon, Méadel, and Rabeharisoa, "The Economy of Qualities."

<sup>117</sup> Fry, *Remakings*, 87—101.



to disagree with the Brewers' Association's changing definition of craft brewers, but the fact that it changes is not one of them.)

Fry goes on to give an interpretation of the changing meaning of craft, beginning with a description of the industrial-era sense of the term: "Craft often gets posed as an embodiment of those traditions and values antithetical to mass-produced method and forms ... it was given an enhanced domain of moral claim to conserve pre-industrial values."<sup>118</sup> He adds that craft tends to maintain a "privileged aesthetic" or be seen as "the luxury end of niche marketing."<sup>119</sup> All of this will sound very familiar to anyone paying attention to the craft beer world.

In contrast to this commonly-understood sense, and in the context of the current era, Fry underlines the importance of seeing craft now not as morally or otherwise superior to industrial production, but in a more fundamental way as an aspect and a reflection both of social interaction and of being itself—as "a particular way of human becoming and being through the actions and consequences of modes of material production"<sup>120</sup>. In this way, craft is given a material, rather than moral, basis—yet its value is not merely material. Fry urges us to identify craft not by the characteristics of the craft object itself, but by the social relations and skills that it reveals. He sees craft as an "applied ecology" that

- has quality as an aim, "with quality itself being an expression of caring about and accounting for the life of the product after the act of production"
- is a "means to conserve human-centred knowledges essential for survival"
- is "a way of being in and with the world"

Fry's work here carries the seeds of his later writings on Sustainment. He sees craft as "of central importance to the future"<sup>121</sup> when imbued with these new values connected to quality, humanity and being.

The potential of craft to shape change, or at least to challenge more than just large-scale industry, is described by Hughes:

The key to craft, however, is the fusion of design and making and the ongoing dialogue this establishes between maker, object, materials and processes. By collapsing, to greater or lesser degrees, the distinction between the mind and the body, object and subject and, ultimately, the material and spiritual, craft represents a challenge to the dominant conceptual framework of our civilisation.<sup>122</sup>

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118 Ibid., 88.

119 Ibid., 88.

120 Fry, *Remakings*, 91.

121 Ibid., 99.

122 Hughes, "Towards a Post-Consumer Subjectivity: A Future for the Crafts in the Twenty First Century?"

When Brown points out that Britain, among others, has always had craft brewing, it suggests a possible repositioning of the term 'craft beer' not simply as a reaction against the dominance of large-scale industry, but as something pre-existing. Craft brewing as per its definition in the US is reactionary, but the ideas behind it are nothing new—they go back to at least the Middle Ages.

Tony Fry seeks to liberate craft from the ideas generally associated with it which are out of place, or even damaging, in the context in which we find ourselves. Elsewhere, he urges us to 'remake thinking' in order to change the way we act in the world. This, he says, "could mean a literal disassembly and recreation of some thing, but equally it could also leave a thing totally untouched, but transform how it is viewed and used by radically changing its meaning and status."<sup>123</sup> If we look again at brewing while following the sense of new values in craft, can we move beyond the out-of-place ideas and remake the thinking behind the concept of craft brewing?

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Fry, "The Dialectic of Sustainment."

# 4. ASPECTS OF A MULTI-LOCAL SOCIETY



**H**aving discussed the history of beer in general, and the emergence of craft beer in particular, let us now examine the characteristics of the phenomenon, as collected through literature, interviews, and participant observation, and examined through the lens of the multi-local society, in order to fulfil the designer's sense-making role by giving visibility to this promising case.

We can remind ourselves here of the social innovation processes that Manzini describes as coming together to form a multi-local society: cosmopolitan localism, creative communities, and collaborative networks. These are notional categories, but really all of these aspects are interconnected. Manzini also uses the acronym SLOC, for *small, local, open, connected*; to describe the scenario in which “a sustainable, networked society”<sup>124</sup> could come about. These four terms offer a useful shorthand, as will be apparent when looking through the case data: it should come as no surprise to learn that craft breweries are typically small and local, but we will see that they are also remarkably open and connected.

# 4.1 DOMAINS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

We have already seen that small is relative; the same can be said for local. With the caveat that “scales are social/ cultural constructions and have no intrinsic meaning,”<sup>125</sup> we can identify multiple scales that will be useful to help conceive of different levels of small and local. Kossoff presents five *domains of everyday life*, collaborative networks described as “nested levels of community,” each of which on its own has at some point in history satisfied human needs (as defined by Max-Neef et al.<sup>126</sup>). These domains are: Household; Village or Neighbourhood; City; Region; Planet.<sup>127</sup>

The changes in brewing throughout history have followed this path from household to planet, and establishment on a larger scale has tended to reduce the activity on smaller scales. Region- and planet-level brewing companies had all but removed brewing activities on the smaller scales, thus reducing the ability of people to satisfy their human needs at those scales. This has of course happened with other aspects of human life too, like health, education, or entertainment, and it leads to a hollowing out of society in the lower-level domains, to “alienated relationships between people, their artefacts, and nature.” Brewing was once a fundamental part of everyday life on the household, village and city scale. The (re)emergence of craft brewing helps to restore life to these neglected domains (Figure 10).

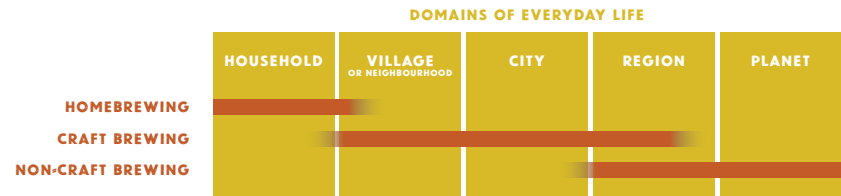


Figure 10. Brewing in domains of everyday life

125 Schnell, “Deliberate Identities.”  
126 Max-Neef et al., Human Scale Development : An Option for the Future These are 10 material and non-material needs that are common to all cultures: subsistence; affection; participation; creation; understanding; identity; freedom; protection; idleness; transcendence. An argument could be made for brewing being connected to at least half of these!  
127 Kossoff, “Holism and the Reconstitution of Everyday Life: A Framework for Transition to a Sustainable Society.”

## 4.2 A SENSE OF PLACE

Manzini has this to say on the value of building a sense of place: “The existence of a multiplicity and variety of places is a precondition of a more resilient natural, social, and production system: one that is capable of adapting to unexpected events and lasting over time.”<sup>128</sup>

A sense of place is not, however, something that just exists, or doesn’t. Schnell and Reese<sup>129</sup> describe place attachment and the sense of place as “active, conscious processes” rather than passive qualities—processes that must be attended to with more effort in the present globalised context than was needed in the past. In their view, there is a reciprocal relationship between local breweries and place attachment. They claim the success of microbreweries (in the US, at least) is due in part to a desire among people to reconnect with “local communities, settings, and economies,” while at the same time, microbreweries have been central to the re-establishment of local identities in recent decades, having become “important purveyors and promoters of place attachment in local communities.”<sup>130</sup>

As proof of place attachment, they cite examples of microbreweries’ names, beer names, and marketing materials, many of which reference distinctively local, and often obscure, places, people, or incidents. Indeed, the authors state that they “found it remarkable how much research and effort many brewers and owners had given to the naming process, often drawing from deep- rooted affection for the places where they live.”<sup>131</sup> It seems also that this local focus is not exclusionary, but proud and welcoming, evidenced in a statement from a brewer at Belt Brewing Company in Missouri when explaining the name of their Conestoga wheat beer:

If someone comes in from the area, say from Nebraska, they are probably going to know what a Conestoga wagon is. On the other hand, if someone from Florida comes in who doesn’t know what a Conestoga wagon is or what it was for, we then have the ability to share with them a little bit of our history and ideals.<sup>132</sup>

Local references give the chance, then, to surface a sense of belonging in local people, and transmit some knowledge and culture to outsiders. Beyond this, though, there is other evidence of genuine rootedness in local communities, with breweries making specific beers to raise money for local projects or institutions: Wynkoop Brewing of Denver, for example, brews special beers to raise money for local institutions like the Denver Zoo and the Denver Museum of Natural History. Buzzard’s

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128 Manzini, *Design, When Everybody Designs*, 191.

129 Schnell and Reese, “Microbreweries as Tools of Local Identity.”

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid.



Bay Brewing in Westport, Massachusetts, gives a portion of its profits to preserve farmland in Massachusetts. Bray's Brew Pub in Naples, Maine, offers specific beers such as Holt Pond Preservation Ale to raise money for the projects of a local land trust.<sup>133</sup>

*“We’ve gained a new appreciation for local products made by real people in real places. We’ve suddenly remembered that these things are an important part of our lives and our communities, and that much of what they give us can’t be measured in pints or pounds.”* – Magic Hat Brewery, Vermont<sup>134</sup>



*Experiments in home malting.*

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Ibid.

134

Ibid.

## 4.3 LOCAL INGREDIENTS

The global food chain has all but wiped out our sense of locality and seasonality. Architect Carolyn Steel has described the change:

The food we eat today is driven not by local cultures, but by economies of scale, and those economies apply to every stage of the food supply chain. Strawberries these days are a commodified product; the result of a food industry geared less towards the niceties of terroir than to the principles of car assembly pioneered by Henry Ford. Its success lies in its ability to reduce a highly complex process (food production) to an operation so streamlined that its very product (food) is now subservient to it.<sup>135</sup>

This is important not just from a cultural point of view, but also ecologically. Local knowledge and embedded cultural values represent millennia of experience in productive and efficient use of available foods. Working with local ingredients is one step towards regaining some of that knowledge, and its attendant abilities, while strengthening local connections. We will now look at some of the ways in which craft brewing contributes to this, ingredient by ingredient.

### 4.3.1 MALT

*“There are very few people who know anything about malt, let alone how to do it” -*

Zach Christensen, Christensen Farms<sup>136</sup>

The story of malt, unsurprisingly, mirrors that of beer very closely; the malting industry is geared towards supplying the brewing industry, and is predominantly large, consolidated, and predisposed to monoculture. But local brewers are making their presence felt, and the demand for local beer is spurring a demand for local malt.

An article<sup>137</sup> profiling some aspiring maltsters in the US featured a farmer, Zach Christensen, who had been asked by a local distiller to grow a small quantity of a particular barley variety, but who couldn't find anywhere that would malt the small quantity planned, so he built his own malting facility and began experimenting. Also featured were a couple, Andrea and Christian Stanley, who were planning to start a

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Steel, Hungry City.

136

So, “Amber Waves of Grain.”

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Ibid.



brewery and “took it for granted that we’d be able to find farmers to grow local grain for us, not realizing that the closest malt house was in Wisconsin”—the Stanleys are based in Massachusetts, a few states over. They started their own maltings and also began farming to get the quality of barley they wanted. Andrea Stanley points out the flexibility and variety possible with smaller operations: “The creative side of what I do is specialty malts ... Chocolate rye, roasted oats--[with] a local, small malthouse, the possibilities are limitless in terms of what we could make for you.”

In the US, where small brewers have had to import European malt to get the varieties they want, there are now enough small maltsters to have formed the Craft Malting Guild, which defines craft malt as made “using a majority of locally grown grains”, and “without chemical additives during processing.”<sup>138</sup> They are expanding the reach of the idea of local, while at the same time recovering some of the knowledge of grain varieties and malting techniques—knowledge that has been gathered over thousands of years—that has been squeezed out with consolidation and monocultures.

In Europe, meanwhile, at least some of this ancient knowledge has been well preserved. For example, before indirect heat was widely used to dry (or kiln) malted grains, kilning was carried out over an open fire. The smoke from the fire would penetrate the malt and be tasted in the beer. Of the nine breweries in the Bavarian town of Bamberg, two still kiln over an open fire, and consequently the town is well known for its smoky *rauchbier*. The two breweries—Schlenkerla and Spezial—were made “passengers” on Slow Food Germany’s *Ark of Taste*, the organisation’s commemoration of culturally significant foods, for maintaining this traditional method.<sup>139</sup>

Finland’s Malmgård brewery is located on the estate of the same name, and brews some of its beers using spelt and emmer heritage grain varieties that are grown on the estate, and also using water from the estate’s own spring, neatly combining locality and biodiversity. (And history: emmer goes back to ancient Egypt, with evidence suggesting that it was “the primary cereal used, not only for food, but for the payment of wages and taxes at that time.”<sup>140</sup>)

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138 “What Is Craft Malt | Craft Malting Guild.”

139 Slow Food Deutschland, “Bamberger Rauchbier Traditioneller Herstellungsart.”

140 Murray, quoted in Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing*, 40.

#### 4.3.2 HOPS (AND OTHER SPICES)

*“We want to grow hops across a network of individual and community gardens, get local breweries to make beer out of them and drink the result. Simple!”* – Helen Steer & Ann

Bodkin<sup>141</sup>



*Hop cone*

The *Grow Beer* project is helping to restore the idea of using local ingredients, increase knowledge about those ingredients, and build community, all while giving people direct experience of growing something that will become a part of their beer.

The project involves participants each buying a hop rhizome and planting it in spring in their garden, on a balcony, or in a community garden. When harvest time comes, the group of growers pick their hop cones and come together at a local brewery, where the group's hop haul

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Hopkins, “When the Hop Fields Come to Town.”

is used in a batch of beer. The beer then goes on sale in local bars—with a little reserved for the hop growers to taste the fruits of their labour, of course. Grow Beer began in London in 2012, and has since spread to other cities in the UK. The project's founders describe their motivation, and the results they have seen:

We wanted to find a way to reach beyond the usual food activist types and get lots of people excited about regional food and drink ... We've had many people tell us that since growing hops and becoming part of the brewing process in their small way, they have a greater appreciation for real ale and now make a point of seeking out local and regional breweries instead of getting a standard lager. We've also heard from growers who have been encouraged by how easy growing hops is; some have gone on to join community gardens, get involved in Land Share or start growing other things at home. Another positive we've witnessed is that people are having conversations about where our food and drink comes from (often sparked by people noticing brews with hops imported from New Zealand or America) and how difficult it must be for a farmer to make a living (often sparked by pest or weather woes). These conversations are really important and I love how they happen naturally without us being preachy or having 'an agenda'.<sup>142</sup>

The distributed, small-scale way of working is good for building community and increasing knowledge about what we consume, and good for the brewers, but also good for the hops themselves, as Rob Hopkins has described:

In some ways, growing hops in 'patchwork farms', that is, a number of gardens across a city, is ideal. According to Martin Crawford [of the Agroforestry Research Trust], the two main challenges that affect hop growing, aphids and mildew, will sweep through hops on a field scale, but in a more dispersed context, in a more biodiverse setting, should be less of an issue.<sup>143</sup>

Finally, the project is an example of peer learning: "When we started this project, neither of us knew particularly much about growing hops or making beer," Steer and Bodkin said. "Of course, we did our homework and read a few books and articles but as long as you are upfront with your growers, you can learn alongside them. It's all an experiment, a journey we go on together."<sup>144</sup>

Various other ingredients besides hops have been used for bittering and flavouring beer over the millennia, and these would naturally have been gathered from the local environment. Many craft brewers have revisited this tradition—but with a twist, using unexpected ingredients that represent the locality. In Spain, for example, the Cerex brewery in Extremadura brews its Ibérica de Bellota with acorns (which are the main component of the diet of the pigs who go on to become that region's famed *jamón ibérico*). In Galicia, local seaweed is used in the Loira rye lager made by the Mendiña brewery; brewer Alberte Fernández Pérez sees the value of local ingredients as something that a "consumer can recognise as their own cuisine."<sup>145</sup>

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142 Steer and Bodkin, "I Want to Start a Group."

143 Hopkins, "When the Hop Fields Come to Town."

144 Steer and Bodkin, "I Want to Start a Group."

145 Brones, "What Craft Beer Can Teach the Brewery Big Boys."

### 4.3.3 YEAST

While barley and wheat are agricultural products, and hops are classed as horticultural, yeast is the one ingredient in the beer-making process that's actually alive. Not only that, it's all around us. Jeff Mello started the *Local Yeast Project* to help people understand this. After a successful attempt to harvest yeast from his garden that would ferment beer, the Washington DC-based homebrewer began to look farther afield. He sells "backyard yeast wrangling tool kits" (including test tubes, agar, petri dishes etc.) so that others can also harvest yeast from nearby fruits, flowers, or just the open air. "You can buy pure brewer's yeast cultures, but I wanted to show people that you can source yeast from anywhere," he has said.<sup>146</sup>

The project goes further than this, though. The kits include a return envelope so successfully wrangled yeasts can be sent to Mello for preservation in his yeast bank. His stated aim is to collect yeast from every zip code in the United States—about 43,000 individual locations. He donates samples to breweries and homebrew clubs in exchange for data on fermentation. Contributors can also exchange their yeast samples for another, and experience yeast from a different area. Mostly they are encouraged to recognise the uniqueness of what they find in their own locality. Mello says "the collective effect of having local ingredients, including local yeast, truly creates a local profile of that product. I think it can help change people's opinions of what food is and what food can be."<sup>147</sup>

For those who prefer to let somebody else make the beer (and go hunting for microbes), there have been other opportunities for understanding the different characteristics of different yeasts. Danish brewer Mikkeller, run by Mikkel Borg Bjergsø, has twice released a series of beers made with exactly the same recipe save for the yeast used for fermentation. "Yeast is one of beer's most important ingredients. Ninety percent of all styles are defined by the yeast,"<sup>148</sup> believes Bjergsø. The *Yeast Series 2.0*, released in 2013, comprised six beers, fermented with yeast strains known from different beer styles, and different parts of the world.<sup>149</sup> A comparison like this can show how taste, aroma, body, colour, and clarity are all affected by the yeast.

*"It's interesting to teach people about ingredients."* – Mikkel Borg Bjergsø<sup>150</sup>

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146 Bernstein, "Counter Culture."

147 Vandenengel, "Yeast Wrangling for Homebrewers."

148 Bernstein, *Brewed Awakening*, 70.

149 Lager, English Ale, American Ale, Saison, *Brettanomyces Lambicus*, and *Brettanomyces Bruxellensis*.

150 Bernstein, *Brewed Awakening*, 74.

#### 4.3.4 DRINKING THE LANDSCAPE

We have seen how beer can offer a more direct connection with the local environment. Some people take that concept more literally than others. In Oregon, a stronghold of craft beer in the US, homebrewer and outdoors enthusiast Eric Steen has been arranging guided hikes for brewers who then devise recipes based on the plants encountered on the trail. He calls it *Beers Made by Walking*. Since 2011, the project has worked with over 100 breweries to “create unique beers that give drinkers a sense of place. The hope in the initial program was to simply get people outdoors, do something creative, and think about our local landscapes in new ways.”

Steen is interested in fostering connections between people and place, but just as important is making new connections with people. “Some brewers aren’t outdoor types,” he says. “Some hikers may not know a lot about beer. Beers Made by Walking brings them all together and helps each group view the world a little differently.”<sup>151</sup>

Henriëtte Waal has gone one step further than Steen. The Dutch designer’s *Buitenbrouwerij* (Outside Brewery), as the name suggests, was designed to brew directly in the natural environment. Waal co-designed the mobile brewing facility with local homebrewers in Tilburg in 2009, and learned how to brew from the locals she worked with. She has since travelled with it around the Netherlands, and to Belgium and Germany, two countries with strong brewing traditions. Outside Brewery allows brewing both in and directly from the environment. A filtration system allows water to be taken straight from ditches or ponds, and foraged plants can be added immediately after picking. Waal calls the resulting product *landschapsbier*—landscape beer.

The project began as a way of showing others (and learning for herself) the brewing process, getting the local homebrewers out of their sheds and garages and making their work visible. She says “initially the project was all about the concept, and that you could see how brewing beer works.” But it turned out that brewing in the landscape also provided another kind of learning opportunity: “the beers that it produced were actually very good. We had beers made from clover, wild hops, linden-tree blossoms, nettles, yarrow, really all kinds of things. It was amazing, the flavours you could produce.”<sup>152</sup>

Working so directly and immediately with local flora requires openness to experimentation and a willingness to embrace the unknown. Waal explains that the challenge of working with local ingredients is that “you can never be sure how much bitterness wild plants give ... there

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Kiniry, “These Beers Are Made by Walking.”

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Bijl, “Henriette Waal, Beer Woman in a Man’s World.”

are no standards but working with your intuition, experience and a lot of improvisation.”<sup>153</sup>

*“Every beer from the Outside Brewery is a surprise.”* – Henriëtte Waal<sup>154</sup>

These projects can be described as way of finding context-based meaning, in line with the work of Ernstman & Wals.<sup>155</sup> They describe the importance of direct experience in bringing an understanding of ‘fuzzy’ concepts like sustainability or sustainable development, which “essentially deal with living and life” and are “rendered ‘vague’ and meaningless in abstracted form and only gain meaning from real living situations and in context.”

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153      Waal, email message to author.

154      Ibid.

155      Ernstman and Wals, “Locative Meaning-Making.”

## 4.4 IT CAN TAKE AN OUTSIDER TO NOTICE WHAT'S LOCALLY UNIQUE

### INTERVIEW: NICK RAVENHALL, OLD WORTHY BREWING CO.<sup>156</sup>

When New Zealander Nick Ravenhall moved to Scotland, he noticed a local tradition of drinking a beer and a whisky side by side—known as a “half-and-half.” Ravenhall worked in distribution in the whisky industry, and had a distiller’s education, but he became enamoured of this local habit to the extent that he decided he should make a beer that would suit being paired with whisky. “I just had the idea in my head” he says, “and I also was thinking that the beers I was drinking in Scotland never really matched that well to the whiskies I like to drink. I mean it was ok, but I thought that you could probably make beer and have fun with it, and design it to a whisky—a specific whisky recipe. And so that’s how it started.”

By teaming up with a local brewer, and arranging brewing time at a local brewery, Old Worthy Scottish Pale Ale was created. After a few years, production was interrupted when the brewery was sold. While finding another brewery to work with, the decision was made to expand their range, but to ill effect for a time.

We were like ‘oh we need an IPA, and we need this and we need that’ because everyone else had that, and we did that for a year, and it was like, ‘why are we doing this shit?’ It wasn’t even matched to whiskies. It just didn’t feel genuine or real, and so it just ended.” The team then rethought its strategy, returning to the original idea of the half-and-half. “We were like ‘you know what, I don’t care that people think that us doing whisky and beer is weird and crazy, it’s why we do what we do, so fuck it, we’re just going to do that from now on and that’s all we’re going to do, ever.’ And so we started again, and we reached out to a bunch of different distilleries, and we’re like ‘alright, this is what we do,’ and they’re like ‘that’s really cool, can we support it,’ and it’s just been going up and up and up, and more and more fun.

Celebrating the local culture of Scottish drinkers has worked in two ways, both bringing the idea to an international audience, and allowing locals to look again at their own beer traditions.

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Ravenhall, interview by author.

“On Untappd,<sup>157</sup> when we first started doing it, people were like ‘what is this whisky and beer shit?’, and then people started to post their whisky and beer matches, and then they were writing ‘wow, this tastes really cool,’ so it’s like, ‘mission accomplished.’ People are trying it, and they’re enjoying it, and it comes back to it being local. I look at Scotland—I lived there for a long time, I love being there—and I’m like ‘why do you guys keep copying what Americans are doing?’ You’ve got this amazing beer tradition here. Real ale doesn’t suck, real ale is cool. You could make it cool if you just thought about it a little bit. And we sit there and we go ‘you know what, this is something that is uniquely Scottish, drinking whisky and beer the way that you drink it. We’re going to take it, and we’re gonna be fucking proud of it.’

*It’s a lot about getting back to being local, and being true, and being honest about what it is that you’re about, and not trying to be anything else other than yourself.”*

For brewers, having a sense of purpose, recognising and deciding what it is that you’re doing and aiming for, is a difficult thing—especially as more competition appears on the small scale. Ravenhill has seen this from his work in distribution with small brewers in the Nordics.

I think, especially for the small brewers now, it’s a huge challenge. What are you about? What do you bring to the table that makes you, not just unique and different, but makes your story real. Because there are now a hundred brewers in Norway who are like ‘we’re homebrewers, we love beer’. Cool, that’s great. And you’re all brewing American IPAs and double IPAs and Russian Imperial stouts, and, oh my god, you just all started trying to get into sales at the same time. Yes, it’s great having guys who are out there wanting to brew better beer, but what is it that you bring that people will remember, and it means something to them? And I think that’s where we get to that place where, I think, you’ll see a lot of these small guys start to fall away. I think that will happen. There’s not enough people up here to drink enough beer to sustain the market that all the brewers are trying to push for at the moment. Or, they have to change the way that they look at how their business is supposed to run. Are they trying to turn into a five million euro business? Or, are they happy having something which is only drunk in their local town, which maybe doesn’t make a huge amount of money, but employs Henkka and fuckin’ Mika and their dog, and adds something to the vibrancy of the community. That’s equally, I think, in terms of culture, an important thing to consider.

Ravenhill works in distribution for beer and whisky. Considering how much of his work involves taking beer out of its locality and selling it somewhere else, his enthusiasm for the idea of local beer is notable.

For me, beer is about being local more than anything. As much as you see these guys who are trying to export stuff everywhere and take over the world, the most beautiful breweries for me are the ones that you find in a small town, and you can only buy the beer in a small town and the beer is fresh and amazing and the locals are proud of it, and you leave and you just don’t see it anywhere else. It’s part of the fabric of a community.

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A beer-related social media site/application



Communicate these kinds of values to the consumer can be difficult, but Ravenhill has an ace up his sleeve when it comes to promoting the idea of local. For a planned tasting event pairing food with local drinks, he says

we'll talk about drinking local, supporting local, and supporting your community. And explaining that beer, when you have it at its freshest, is the best you can ever ever ever drink it, so getting a little taste if they like these beers ... and then they know that they've got their beer locally, go down and try them, and see what fresh beer is all about. I used to work for Budweiser Budvar, and yeah they make a really nice pilsner, but when you go down to Budvar and you drink it, and they've got a tank in the pub that they fill up every day, it just changes your mind about what pilsner actually should be—and I think all beers respond the same way.

## 4.5 SCALING OUT, NOT UP

*“In the old way, breweries scaled up, pushed parallel businesses out of the market and paid out low wages to eke out a tiny profit over millions of units. In the new way, breweries hire skilled production workers, crowdsource startup capital, share equipment with other brewers and collaborate on new beers.”*<sup>158</sup>

### 4.5.1 SMALLNESS

Manzini says that “small-scale organizations are, generally speaking, more transparent and comprehensible and therefore closer to the local community.”<sup>159</sup> Smallness is possibly the most visible characteristic of craft breweries—the term *microbrewery* was in common use before being superseded by *craft brewery*—yet some of the most successful ones have grown to many times their original size. It appears that there is a generational shift, though, in the ambitions of craft brewers. Steve Hindy of Brooklyn Brewery has stated his aims for his own company’s growth, and described the change:

Whenever anyone asks me how big Brooklyn Brewery can get, I say my goal is to be twice as big as I am now. I think most brewers of my generation and the second generation look at their business that way. But the next wave of craft brewers may have different expectations. Many seem to be satisfied with the intangible rewards of brewing—making great beer, creating community, being the go-to beer guy or gal in their circles. Many are happy to run a brewpub.<sup>160</sup>

Hindy cites examples of this ‘next wave’, such as Evan Klein, founder of Barrier Brewing Co. in Oceanside, New York, who operates a

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Campbell, “CRAFT by Under My Host” No. 5.”

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Manzini, “Design in the Transition Phase: A New Design Culture for the Emerging Design,” 23.

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Hindy, *The Craft Beer Revolution*, 257.

5-barrel system, brewing twenty different beers a year. “Small batch, variety, it’s working for us,” Klein said.

We’re obviously a very small operation. The idea of staying local in New York is appealing, making it a destination brand . . . so people who come from out of state are excited to try some Barrier. The main goal is to be happy, and support the family and lead a good life and have some free time—which there is none of now.<sup>161</sup>

In a similar vein, Californian brewpub Russian River is seeking growth, but warily, according to owner Vinnie Cilurzo:

We are on a fact-finding mission to figure out how much we want to grow. We are thinking maybe we want to grow to 25,000 or 30,000 barrels [per year]. We don’t want to get much bigger than that. I’m not sure we buy into the mind-set that you have to keep growing.<sup>162</sup>

Smallness, by these examples, could be seen not as the absolute size of the operation, but the goal of something other than continuous expansion.

#### 4.5.2 DIVERSITY

Biodiversity is a byproduct of smallness. Large-scale production—or perhaps just the culture that lies behind it—demands consistency of product to very tight tolerances. This, in turn, demands consistency of raw materials. When output is in the region of hundreds of millions of barrels per year, from multiple breweries, perhaps in various countries, there is simply no room for variation in ingredients. Craft brewers make a greater variety of products, in far smaller quantities. Many experiment with older, pre-industrial grain types, such as spelt or emmer. Some use only organic grains. Clearly, moving away from monoculture in beer selection can lead to a scaling back of monoculture in grain production, and thus, a shift to a way of producing food that can provide both greater nutrition and greater ecological resilience.

Seasonal beers are a reminder of seasonality in a persisting environment of “fresh” fruits and vegetables available year-round only because of the global food chain, with all its attendant costs. Whereas large producers are bound by their nature to producing, largely, a single product with little or no variation (for example, Koff Jouluolut (Christmas beer)<sup>163</sup> is ever so slightly more malty than their regular beer, which is to say not really malty at all), craft brewers’ small batch sizes lets them experiment with seasonal ingredients. Some of the smallest breweries don’t even have a ‘flagship’ beer that is produced year-round, preferring to work

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161 Ibid., 214—15.

162 Ibid., 160.

163 From Finland’s largest brewery, Sinebrychoff, which is owned by Carlsberg.

with locally or seasonally available ingredients to continually create new recipes.

### 4.5.3 COLLABORATION

*“In what other industry will you find competitors working together for fun?” – Garrett Oliver<sup>164</sup>*

Oliver<sup>164</sup>

Brooklyn Brewery’s Garrett Oliver was a pioneer of collaboration brewing, visiting English brewery Brakspear in 1997 as “an American on holiday,”<sup>165</sup> and working with brewer Peter Scholey to brew an English-style bitter, but with an American hop variety. “The original idea was basically, I make a beer with you and you make a beer with me—our beer reflects our character, and you can come brew something British here.”<sup>166</sup> Though Brakspear closed down before Scholey could visit Oliver in Brooklyn, the idea took hold. Brooklyn Brewery has since collaborated with Germany’s Schneider, Belgium’s Achouffe, and Denmark’s Nørrebro Bryghus, among others, and collaborations of various kinds have become commonplace in the craft beer world.

Oliver sees collaboration as a way for both parties to learn from each other, but also as a way to expand the culture of openness that exists in American craft brewing to other parts of the world where this way of working is unfamiliar, which is particularly the case in those countries with long brewing traditions, like Belgium, England, and Germany. Oliver says that collaborations have “had a major effect on other brewing cultures.”<sup>167</sup>

### 4.5.4 A COMMON VISION

It is observed that craft beer aficionados seek not the comfort of the familiar but the excitement of the new. This does not necessarily negate brand loyalty, for craft breweries regularly make seasonal and experimental products in addition to their core range of products, allowing

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164 BeerGuidePL, Garrett Oliver’s Speech at EBBC 2013 in Edinburgh.

165 Ibid.

166 Schonberger, “The 10 Beers That Made My Career: Garrett Oliver of Brooklyn Brewery.”

167 Brooks, “Brewing Togetherness.”

fans to experiment in-brand. Alongside this, collaboration brewing allows a new brand to be tested within the sphere of familiarity of a known brand. Overall, though, it seems that customers' loyalty is not limited to any one company, but to the overall idea of craft, or to the values embodied by craft producers. This could be seen as equivalent to Manzini's notion of the "common vision" made possible in a networked society. Craft breweries' brand images can vary wildly, from conservative to iconoclastic. Equally, their product offerings can vary from traditional to experimental. What unites them is a commitment to the craft itself, and an openness in the way they go about their business. As former beer marketer, current beer writer Pete Brown says,

*“craft is about brewing before marketing, about flavour before packaging, about integrity and honesty before segmentation and exploitation.”*<sup>168</sup>

Within craft beer, there exists a transparency and an accessibility that one doesn't get—maybe cannot get—with macro producers. With today's level of access to information and the ease of direct, unmediated communication, an honest and open approach can communicate far more powerfully than slogans or gimmicks. While big beer is floundering, and putting its creative energies into redesigning logos and bottle shapes, craft is succeeding through word of mouth and clarity of ideals.

*Harvard Business Review* has reported on the growing importance of direct relationships between producers and consumers: “Customers still value strong brands, but what constitutes a strong brand is now more dependent on customers' direct experience with an offering, and with their relationship with the firm that produces it.”<sup>169</sup>

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Brown, “Another Long Post about Craft Beer.”

Binder and Hanssens, “Why Strong Customer Relationships Trump Powerful Brands.”

## 4.6 “HELLO, THIS IS ANTTI, DO YOU WANT TO BUY BEER?”

### INTERVIEW: ANTTI HASANEN, RUOSNIEMEN PANIMO<sup>170</sup>

Hobbies can escalate quickly for Finns. Juho-Matti Karpale began homebrewing in 2010, and after making “seven or eight” 20-litre batches of beer in his kitchen, occupied a barn in Pori and built himself a 500-litre brewhouse out of old dairy equipment. By the summer of 2012 he and some friends had founded Ruosniemen Panimo and were selling kegs of beer to bars in Helsinki. Now they have a core range of ten beers that can be found in supermarkets and Alko stores<sup>171</sup> around Finland. But, you know, it’s still just a hobby...

Brewery cofounder Antti Hasanen described the friends’ motivation:

We are all engineers, and many of us do some consulting stuff and a lot of Excel and PowerPoint and Word, and we basically produce paper of some kind, so, reports. So one of the drivers to join the brewery and be a part of it was to do something where you can see the result quite fast, and do something with your hands, and do something else than resourcing and reporting and consulting—something meaningful, so to speak.

Many people brew beer as a hobby, often even on a large enough scale to supply events such as weddings. Homebrewers sometimes also take the next step and begin to brew commercially - many of today’s successful craft brewers began as homebrewers. Less common is operating a brewery on a commercial basis while explicitly keeping it as a hobby and continuing in the day job. The brewery’s website proudly states that its beer is “brewed by engineers.”

Yeah, it’s a hobby. Because there’s quite many of us, there’s seven of us, so we can share the tasks quite easily. Because we all brew—we need two people usually to do the batch—so I don’t need to be there every week or every two weeks. So I’ve been there maybe once in six weeks. Most of us also have family, small kids, so that’s time-consuming too. So it’s a hobby still, but it’s taking more and more time all the

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170 Hasanen, interview by author.

171 The state alcohol monopoly, the only stores with the right to sell products containing more than 4.7% alcohol.

time, and we need to think about expansion in the next few months ... because now we're doing all the time at full capacity. We're selling everything quite easily actually.

The brewery was working at capacity, and selling all its products through direct connections with bars and drinkers, without any advertising besides social media: “No, we don't need to do that, because we're selling everything we produce, we don't need to do more than calling, ‘Hello, this is Antti, do you want to buy beer?’”

Ruosniemen Panimo was one of the first of the new small breweries to emerge in a now rapidly expanding scene. Hasanen described how they began selling their beer:

the bars were very interested in the new brewery in Finland, because the craft brewing wasn't really growing at that time ... it was quite easy, we had bottles of beer, and we went to the bars, and gave a tasting ... and they decided if they want to buy or not. That was how it was done in the first bars, but when we got a little bit of a reputation we didn't need anymore those tasting bottles, and we have had quite an active Facebook community, cos it's our best way of marketing. It's cheap—it's free—and we have almost 800 likes in Facebook, so it's a community and we have fans there who spread the word. And that was actually very intentional, to build that kind of community, right in the beginning, because we all have a lot of friends in the engineering business ... and because there's quite many of us, so the group of people who we can take into this fan-net is quite big, all the way from the beginning. So that's how we did it in the beginning. And we still don't have the website.

The brewery's website was created shortly after this interview, and contains the basic information that one would expect about the company and its products. Their social media presence, however, is more actively updated and gives a greater view of the behind-the-scenes operations of the brewery, along with news of availability of their beer in various bars. It is clear that engagement with the community is an important aspect of promoting this company - as with any business, except the cost of doing so is much smaller in this case than in the case of larger companies, where communication is mediated and staff and working processes are not seen.

This connection allows Ruosniemen Panimo to respond directly to their customers. Operating on the scale they do, they do not require expensive and time-consuming market research efforts such as a large brewer would undertake before releasing a new product. In contrast, new offerings from multinational brewing companies seem to be the result of identifying possible market niches to target, with a firm focus, often, on eroding a competitor's market share rather than providing a beverage anyone would want to drink, all dressed up in marketing language to suggest innovation and taste. Here are two examples, from the launch of a new product and the brand update of an existing one respectively:

We can see that there are a number of consumers, especially women, who are very aware of design when they choose beverage products. There may be situations where they are standing in a bar and want their drinks to match their style. In this case,

they may well reject a beer if the design does not appeal to them. – *Jeanette Elgaard Carlsson, International Innovation Director at Carlsberg.*<sup>172</sup>

This not only completely ignores the drink itself (the short-lived Copenhagen lager), but is insulting to women, suggesting they are superficial and cannot possibly make a selection based on flavour.

The same company's Tuborg beer was given a rebrand, because:

We want the brand to appeal to the consumer's desire to 'grab the now' and get the most out of life. – *Massimo Di Dia, Vice President, International Premium Brands.*<sup>173</sup>

This particular product seems to have been devised to be as flavourless as possible in order to avoid offending those who dislike the taste of typical beers—a strategy that must be less costly than creating a beer that actually tastes good and might appeal on its own merits.

In contrast to this, Ruosniemen founder Juho-Matti Karpale has described the brewery's relationship to branding:

From a branding point of view we probably do everything a little bit backwards. First we make the beer, then we force it to sit in the same family as the other beers. Probably the link between all our beers is that they are all a little bit skewed, and maybe not the most typical representatives of their style.<sup>174</sup>

Hasanen explained the market research behind Ruosniemen's Vah-timestari vanilla porter, the first dark beer the brewery produced: "it's a porter ... quite traditional, but with a little bit of spices also ... many people have asked us to brew something black, some dark beer, so, now we do it." The approach to recipe development is similarly straightforward. Hasanen says "we always wanted to brew beer that we like to drink ourselves, so we don't want to sell out, in that sense."

***"We could produce beers which don't taste that much of anything, and maybe sell more, but no, it's not our style."***

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172 Carlsberg Group, "Copenhagen—A Danish Beer with International Appeal."

173 Carlsberg Group, "Tuborg - the Perfect Combination of History and Innovation."

174 Korpinen and Nikulainen, *Suomalaiset pienpanimot*.



## 4.7 BEER=TO=PEER LEARNING

### INTERVIEW: JANI POUTIAINEN, BREWNIVERSE<sup>175</sup>

Why would a brewery sell homebrew kits alongside beer? Why would you enable your customers to make for themselves the very product you're trying to sell them? Norwegian brewery Nøgne Ø began selling kits in its web store not to make money, but to increase understanding about the product. The brewery's founder, Kjetil Jikiun, noticed that "lots of people wanted to brew, but did not have the equipment, and had the misconception that brewing is very difficult or requires expensive equipment. We thought that knowledge is key to staying focused or interested, so we thought that we should make it easier to start home brewing for those who wanted." It seems that he's right; many of those who buy a small four-litre brewing kit come back later for a 25-litre one.<sup>176</sup>

Jikiun sees knowledge as important also for those who just want to appreciate the product. He talks of having to 'train' people to understand Nøgne Ø's beers when the brewery started in 2002, and sees this as a difficult, ongoing task, and one that requires the help of others:

Training/educating people takes time. For us it has taken years, and still we have only scratched the surface. We think that we cannot educate alone. That is why it is so important to find allies and ambassadors. Normal people who in enthusiastic ways will help us spreading the word.<sup>177</sup>

Two such ambassadors can be found in Helsinki. Homebrewers Jani Poutiainen and Juha Sinisalo are the men behind a company called Brewniverse, set up to teach others about tasting, and brewing, beer. They deliver brewing classes at the city's Työväenopisto (Adult Education Centre), hold group beer tastings and offer homebrew equipment for rent. And yes, it's a hobby: Poutiainen describes how the two "do have a company in the background, but it's something that you can be a hobbyist also, and not heavily business-wise oriented. It's kind of interesting also to see how it's evolving ... we haven't had that thinking that much, 'ok let's establish a brewery right here right now, and have a go,' so it's more of delivering the information and raising the awareness.

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175 Poutiainen, interview by author.

176 Jikiun, email message to author.

177 Ibid.

“People just—they don’t know too much about how to brew, what’s going in,” explains Poutiainen.

That has been really evident from the experience. People like to drink—guys like to drink a lot sometimes—but then they don’t know what’s in there and how it’s done. And this has proven to be actually quite rewarding in the sense that, when you get to talk about that in a little bit more depth as well, and people ... still have interest in hearing it, and absorbing. And it’s really nice to hear the feedback, which is that they are, almost all the time, really enthusiastic about it.

*“It’s a bit of a surprise for people that don’t have any experience ... ‘oh you can really brew whatever you want to, and it’s going to be good’”*

Poutiainen and Sinisalo themselves began brewing through the example of an acquaintance:

it was like the year 2000 maybe, and there was already at that time one guy who was brewing, homebrewing—which was really uncommon—but anyhow they had these regular meetings and I went into them, even if we were not brewing ourselves yet. And it took quite some time, but I got some sort of injection from the guys around to look at the beer with a different view also, from the lager, bulk, Koff type of thing. And at some point I realised, what the heck, if you have the patience, and know what to do, and put aside the student type of mentality and just having a thirst for alcohol in there... And once recognising that it’s entirely possible to do quality beers at home, different styles, the thing evolved in the mind: ‘now we’re gonna try it, get some equipment and try it.’ ... And then, things went quite fast after having the actual equipment, and then the quality was fine, so we started brewing quite a lot! ... We also thought, quite soon from the beginning, ok, what the heck, why not start some teaching, some classes.

The two saw teaching as a natural extension of learning, especially with this particular topic, “because people don’t know even the basic four ingredients in a beer ... when you decide to brew yourself, you need to know a little bit more, and it comes naturally along, and then when you feel that, ok, now I’ve internalised the critical things, I’m able to tell that to other people as well.”

This is a textbook example of peer learning, and has benefits for both parties, as described by MIT “open education activist” Phillip Schmidt:

In order to learn, you need access to a few people around you. Some who are just above your position will know a little bit more than you, but because they are not that different from you, they can empathize with your questions or problems. Likewise, it doesn’t hurt to be in touch with a few people just below you. As you help them answer the questions you recently answered for yourself, your own knowledge

and strategies will become more practiced. Teaching others is one of the best ways of learning.<sup>178</sup>

For Brewniverse, offering even some very basic information on beer is valuable in their tasting events, where attendees range from enthusiasts to neophytes:

In our educational aspect, usually it's not something that we would like to go to really in the deep details, but ... if you want to learn from the occasion, it's two things, and we may repeat them at points: what's the basic ingredients—it's like the four of them; and then what's the main things in the brewing process—it's like three points. So if you remember even either of those, you know a lot more than the average guy in a bar. Of course it's not enough to brew yourself yet, but it's a good start.

The brewing process aside, there can be a world of detail in beer just when drinking it: noting all the flavour compounds, detecting off-flavours, recognising hop varieties, and various other types of analysis. Research by Markus Helaniemi<sup>179</sup> into craft beer drinkers in Helsinki shows a willingness among aficionados to pass on their knowledge to the uninitiated, and they (at least those interviewed) seemed to have a good sense of what aspects to focus on: "The hobbyists usually tell about the basic beer styles, what tastes should be found in the beer they are currently having, and what they particularly like about the current beer."

Poutiainen is eager to discuss aspects of tasting—and enjoying—without losing a sense of accessibility:

If you think about beer and how it's tasting, you may not want to overanalyse it, unless you are having that mindset for that particular moment. For me, for instance, if we have [brewed] a batch of beer, I'd like to analyse it through and see how we did it and can we improve the next batch somehow. But then coming to bars and, well, enjoying it rather than thinking about it too much ... we also want to bring a little bit of the psychological side, and the feeling side, and emphasise it, to try to consciously avoid trying to build any of the beer snobiness, because it's a really down-to-earth drink as well, and you don't want to make it too complicated.

Even if we offer views on how you can look at the beer, and smell and taste, and how that could be done, we wouldn't say that it *should* be done. So it's psychological, 'it feels good, and that's good. Period.' ... and then you have a serious path if you want to be a beer judge in a competition. ... You get to choose. That's actually one philosophical emphasis as well, that really basic need to be free to choose. Ok, if you want to choose the serious path, go this way, or if you rather stay on the lighter path, you go that way.

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178 Schmidt, "The Great Peer Learning Pyramid Scheme."

179 Helaniemi, "Pursuit of Hoppiness."



# 5. DISCUSSION



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In this work I set myself the challenge of connecting the academic and the everyday. I did not realise the extent to which this would occur. While I started out thinking that beer is about as everyday as it gets, I was to discover that Being is far more everyday while also leading to the academic. I thought design theory would be the extent of the academic inquiry, but ended up diving into philosophy, which is the original form of making the everyday academic. The circularity of this was reflected throughout the whole process: I attempted to make sense of a design theory that describes design as sense-making. I attempted to apply the practise of design as sense-making to a case where, it turned out, craft brewers are practising (diffuse) design as sense-making. Examining the theory and the case led to the same question arising from both, the answer to which is both incredibly simple and yet unknowable. Still, I seem to have arrived at a point where the case has been somewhat mapped.

## 5.1 REMAKING THE IDEA OF CRAFT BREWING

It seems clear from the data that craft brewers contribute substantially to the development of a sense of place and culture. They also make things happen, for themselves and others, and they collaborate openly, freely and naturally. Finally, they are strongly connected to each other, to their customers, and to their suppliers and the ingredients they use.

After considering a ‘remaking’ of the idea of craft, and seeing how the apparent characteristics of craft brewing fit better with social innovation theory than they do with the generally recognised definition of craft brewing itself, we can see that it may indeed be worth trying to describe this phenomenon in a different way. However, even the possible definitions we could borrow from Manzini—summarised as SLOC; or *cosmopolitan localism*, *creative communities*, *collaborative networks*—don’t quite work as definitions. Craft breweries are often small, but not always. They may be locally embedded, but still export their product around the world. Put simply, while craft brewing in sum is an excellent example, not every craft brewery will embody every one of these elements.

In the light of everything discussed up to now, and drawing particularly on the work of Tony Fry (who in turn draws on Martin Heidegger), I humbly offer a first attempt, not at a definition exactly, but a description, a narrative of craft beer, based on the research findings:

*Craft beer is an embodiment of quality, pleasure and humanity.*

To claim something like this seems faintly ridiculous, yet no more so than to claim the BA definition “small, independent, traditional” sufficiently explains everything. The terms of course require qualification, being used here in the sense that they have been already described in this text. We can unpack the description a little:

- *A craft brewer cares about quality.*

Craft is the creation of marks of care, where care works towards quality in objects and being. Quality here, of course, refers to values rather than “mere facts,” and goes beyond what’s in the glass—it considers the relationships between producer, consumer, product and environment. Action, context, and outcome are all part of the concern for quality.

- *A craft brewer takes pleasure in making.*

Craft is the pleasure of making, for self and others. It is a way of being-in-the-world as something other than a passive consumer—an active wellbeing—deriving pleasure from making and sharing with others, and from others’ making.

- *A craft brewer helps keep the world human.*

Craft does not preclude the use of technology—even pre-industrialcraft activities made use of the available technology of their time, after all—but it does specify the terms of the relationship: human life and humanity take precedence over technology, and preserving human-centred knowledge (of both the mind and the hand) helps preserve our humanity.

While it is not expected that this description will be taken up within the industry, it is useful here in providing a perspective on the activities within the world of brewing that are not taken into consideration by other definitions. It does not directly consider size or ownership, and it allows for the inclusion of homebrewing rather than being limited to commercial activities. It makes no claim on particular styles or strategies, going beyond superficial aspects to consider purpose. Finally, it does not claim to be definitive, but it does allow for changing the terms of the argument when trying to decide if a particular brewer is “craft” or not. This description could even have the potential to give brewers a new way of thinking about their own activities—although it seems at least some already do think this way.

### ***“Beer is people”*** – Garrett Oliver

For an initial test of the *quality, pleasure, humanity* hypothesis, we can turn to the brewers themselves. Here are some thoughts from two of the most visible figures in the US craft beer scene, and one brewer who has worked on both sides of the divide.

Garrett Oliver, brewmaster at New York’s Brooklyn Brewery, and editor of the Oxford Companion to Beer, is a prominent spokesperson for



craft beer. He sees the story of beer as that of the people behind the product. Consequently, craft beer depends on the presence of a human, personal element. To determine if beer qualifies as craft or not, he asks “Is there a personal vision somewhere in what’s going on?”<sup>180</sup>. He elaborates on this point in describing Sierra Nevada, one of the first craft breweries in the US, and now one of the biggest:

If you go and meet [Sierra Nevada founder] Ken Grossman, you know that there is a personal vision of everything that happens in the brewery ... he knows what’s happening in every square inch of the brewery ... and some people tell me ‘Ken Grossman’s doing a million barrels a year, that’s not a craft brewery,’ and I say ‘I don’t think you understand what that word means.’<sup>181</sup>

In contrast, Oliver suggests that non-craft breweries have no such personal connection, saying:

You can go to—name your favourite big brewer—go into a room with all their distributors and all their importers and ask ‘can anybody raise their hand, who is brewmaster of this company? You’re all here—300, 400, 500 of you and you sell a billion dollars a year—who’s brewmaster? Anybody?’ No. Nobody. The brewmaster’s name is money. That’s the name of their brewmaster. That’s the difference.<sup>182</sup>

Oliver says something else that ties in with our description:

The purpose of the brewery is to make us happy. It has three purposes really: we try to make great beer for our customer, we try to return a value to shareholders, and the brewery should make us happy. The thing is, if the brewery is a failing company, and isn’t making money, then we won’t be happy. And we’re proud people, so if we’re not making good beer, then we won’t be happy. So the only purpose of the brewery is to make us happy.<sup>183</sup>

Oliver’s predecessor as Brooklyn’s brewmaster was Bill Moeller, who had come out of retirement to help the new brewery develop the recipe for its first product, and was quite clear about the reason why:

***“For 35 years, I have listened to brewery owners tell me to make a beer cheaper and faster. This is the first time in my career that an owner has ever told me to make the best damn beer I can make.”***<sup>184</sup>

Sam Calagione, founder of the Dogfish Head brewery in Delaware, writes in the introduction to his homebrewing guide *Extreme Brewing*,

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180 BeerGuidePL, Garrett Oliver’s Speech at EBBC 2013 in Edinburgh.

181 Ibid.

182 Ibid.

183 Ibid.

184 Hindy and Potter, *Beer School*, 67.

Though the beer you brew is an obvious end, the process of making it is not just an end but also a means unto itself ... Brewing is a nature-based hobby that restores a measure of humanity and perspective to the art of living.<sup>185</sup>

In all of these comments we see care for quality in the product itself, in the relationships between brewer and owner, owner and customer. We see the brewer taking pleasure in making a good beer, and we see humanity in the prioritising of the beer, brewer, and drinker over industrial and commercial constraints.

## 5.2 EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

*What qualities can be distinguished within craft brewing? What kinds of narratives can be conceptualised based on these qualities and the practices of craft brewers?*

The qualities of craft brewing align particularly well with those of the multi-local society that Manzini proposes. Considering its growing success, craft brewing appears to be a not-so-weak signal of a multi-local society, and a successful example of social innovation toward sustainability. In addition, craft brewers are both emblematic of, and drivers of, this particular brand of social innovation. They are operating as cultural activists by helping people rediscover the natural, agricultural, industrial, and social processes, and the connections between them, that contribute to making beer what it is.

Within craft beer, quality has so far been discussed only in the same kind of restrictive terms described by Carlo Petrini, limited to issues of sanitation and consistency. But craft brewing does appear to have, even if unwittingly, a focus on quality in the expanded sense that I have described. Applying this idea of quality, and the other concepts detailed here, can provide a different perspective on the nature and value of craft brewing. New narratives can also give craft breweries new ways of describing what they do, and new goals to aim for in their practice. I have offered one such narrative.

A further question, or observation, that emerged while building the theoretical framework was that of the possibility of avoiding unsustainability by aiming for quality alone rather than having specific sustainability targets. The narrative I have offered—in short: quality, pleasure, humanity—demonstrates how this might seem plausible. However, it also shows that this may be just one part of the picture. Aiming for quality can help to orient us towards sustainable behaviour, but maybe doesn't quite get us all the way—though it could be argued that pleasure and humanity are encapsulated by quality, and therefore everything does come down to quality alone. For now, this is best left as an open question, and perhaps a topic for future research.

## 5.3 FINAL WORDS

Manzini suggests three possible ways of steering our actions to transition towards sustainability. The first is based on following rules, and the second out of choice. The third, though, is “simply because it is natural to do so.” This involves “each of us following in our own idea of well-being to act also in the interests of everybody else.”<sup>186</sup>

For an encapsulation of what craft beer represents, and a signal of future possibilities, we can look to the US state of Oregon, where “47% of all draft beer consumed is Oregon craft beer.”<sup>187</sup> Economics professor Patrick Emerson describes it as “the most mature craft beer market in the US and perhaps the world,” and shares an anecdote that highlights the extent to which craft beer has changed perceptions there:

My favorite personal index is the college student consumption that I see in my day job as an OSU professor—watching college-types buy beer at the market, drink beer in the bars and talk about their likes and dislikes among a myriad of styles suggests to me that the sea change has come: beer has been redefined. Beer is now defined by having a plethora of styles, brands and tastes. Beer is now connected to place, time and personality. Beer from Bend or Eugene or Hood River is considered different stylistically and provenancially ... Seasonal and special one-offs give beer a time dimension it did not have in the macro days. And brewers are becoming figure-heads, spokespeople for their beer and their brewing philosophy.<sup>188</sup>

In this most mature of craft beer markets, then, Manzini’s third way seems to exist, and a multi-local society is emerging. Craft brewers, acting as sense-makers, are helping others to rediscover quality—to regain a sense of their being-in-the-world.

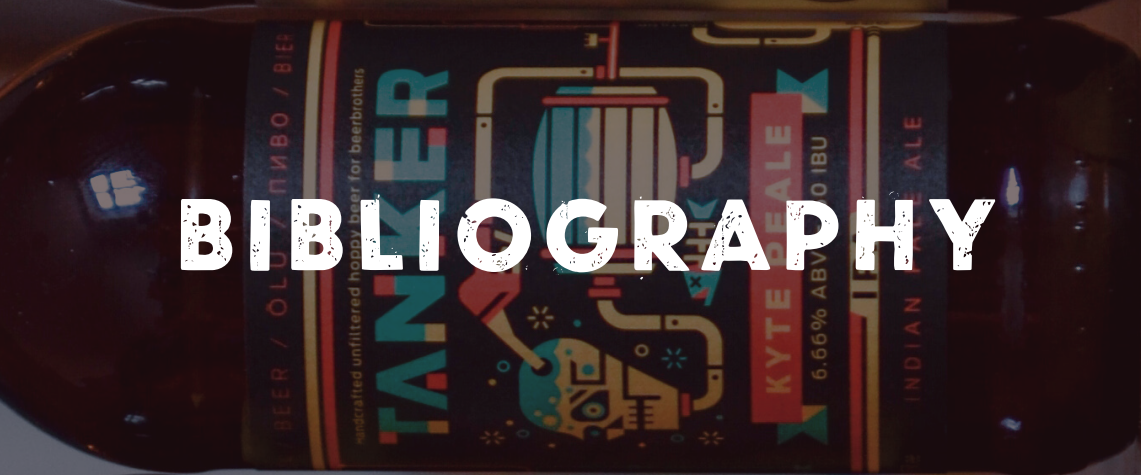
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186 Manzini, *Design, When Everybody Designs*, 203.

187 Emerson, “Oregon Craft Beer Continues to Grow Rapidly -- and What It All Means.”

188 Ibid.

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